

Faust II

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

PART II ACT I SCENE I: A PLEASANT LANDSCAPE

Faust is lying on flowery turf, tired and restless, trying to sleep. A circle of tiny, graceful spirits hovers round him.

ARIEL (Chanting, accompanied by Aeolian Harps.)

When the springtime blossoms, falling,

Shower down, and cover all things,

When the fields with greener blessing

Dazzle all the world of earthlings,

Little elves, but great in spirit,

Haste to help, where help they can,

And, be he holy, be he wicked,

Pity they the luckless man.

You, hovering in airy circles, round his head

Show yourselves in proud elf-form, instead,

Calm all the fierce resistance of his heart,

Remove the bitter barbs of sharp remorse,

Free him from past terrors, by your art.

Four are the watches night makes in its course,

At once, now, mercifully, let the dark depart.

Let his head sink down on pillow's coolness,

Next sprinkle him with dew from Lethe's stream:

Then let his joints be free of cramps and stiffness,

So that he's strong enough to greet day's gleam:

Elves exert your sweetest right,

Return him to the holy light!

CHOIR (Singly, and two or more, alternately and together.)

When the balmy breezes smother

All the green-encircled land,

Sweetly fragrant and mist-covered,
Twilight gathers all around.
Sweet peace then whispers softly,
Rocks the heart on childhood's shores,
And on the eyelids, tired and weary,
Closes daylight's golden doors.
Here the night's already passing,
Sacred stars set, star by star,
Great lights, and the lesser glittering,
Sparkling near, and gleaming far:
Sparkling, where the lake reflects her,
Gleaming bright in cloudless height,
Protecting the deep bliss of rest, there,
Moon, in splendour, rules the night.
The hours have vanished now, already
Joy and pain have flown away,
You are whole! Recover, wholly:
Trust the sight of breaking day.
Greening valleys, swelling hills there,
Rise from out their shadowy sleep:
And, drifting in its waves of silver,
On to harvest, flows the wheat.
Wish then, to achieve your wishes,
Gaze up, at the brightness there!
You are lightly tangled: this is
Sleep, a shell, so now emerge!
Don't delay, walk bravely, tall,
When the crowd waits, hesitating:
The noblest man achieves his all,
By seeing, and then, swiftly, taking.

ARIEL

Listen! Hear the hour nearing!
Ringing out to spirit-hearing,
Now, the new day is appearing.
Doors of stone creak and chatter,
Phoebus' wheels roll and clatter,
What a din the daylight's bringing!
Trombone- and trumpeting,
Eyes amazed, and ears ringing,
The Unheard drops out of hearing.
Slip into the flowers presence,
Deeper, deeper, lie there silent,
In the pebbles, where the leaves bend:
If it strikes you, you'll be deafened.

FAUST

Life's pulses beating now, with new existence,
Greet the mild ethereal half-light round me:
You, Earth, stood firm tonight, as well: I sense
Your breath is quickening all the things about me,
Already, with that joy you give, beginning
To stir the strengthening resolution in me,
That strives, forever, towards highest Being. –
Now the world unfolds, in half-light's gleam,
The wood's alive, its thousand harmonies singing,
While through the valleys, misted ribbons stream:
And heavenly light now penetrates the deep:
Twigs, branches shoot, with fresher life it seems,
From fragrant gulfs, where they were sunk in sleep:
Colour on colour lifts now from the ground,
As leaf and flower with trembling dewdrops weep –

And a paradise reveals itself, all round.
Gaze upwards! – The vast mountain heights
Already with the solemn hour resound:
They are the first to enjoy the eternal light
That later, for us, will work its way below.
Now, to the sloping Alpine meadows bright,
It gives a fresh clarity, a newer glow,
And step by step it reaches us down here: –
It blazes out! – Ah, already blinded, though
I turn away, my eyesight wounded, pierced.
So it is, when to the thing we yearn for
The highest wish so intimately rehearsed,
We find fulfilment opening wide the door:
And then, from eternal space, there breaks
A flood of flame, we stand amazed before:
We wished to set the torch of life ablaze,
A sea of fire consumes us, and such fire!
Love, is it, then? Or hate? This fierce embrace,
The joy and pain of alternating pyres,
So that, gazing back to earth again,
We seek to veil ourselves in youth's desire.
Let the sun shine on, behind me, then!
The waterfall that splits the cliffs' broad edge,
I gaze at with a growing pleasure, when
A thousand torrents plunge from ledge to ledge,
And still a thousand more pour down that stair,
Spraying the bright foam skywards from their beds.
And in lone splendour, through the tumult there,
The rainbow's arch of colour, bending brightly,
Is clearly marked, and then dissolved in air,

Around it the cool showers, falling lightly.
There the efforts of mankind they mirror.
Reflect on it, you'll understand precisely:
We live our life amongst refracted colour.

**PART II ACT I SCENE II: THE EMPEROR'S CASTLE: THE
THRONE ROOM**

A council of state waits for the Emperor. Trumpets. Enter court attendants of all kinds, splendidly dressed. The Emperor approaches the throne: the Astrologer is to his right.

THE EMPEROR

I greet you all, the loved, and true,
Gathered here from far and wide: -
I see a wise man's at my side,
But where on earth's the fool?

ATTENDANT

Right behind your mantle there,
He suddenly tumbled on the stair,
They dragged away the pile of fat.
Dead: or drunk? No man knows that.

A SECOND ATTENDANT

At once, and at a wondrous pace,
Another came to take his place.
Quite extravagantly dressed,
Yet troubling, since he's so grotesque:
Guards closed the door in his face,
Their halberds held crosswise too –
Yet here he comes, the daring fool!

MEPHISTOPHELES (Kneeling in front of the throne.)

What is cursed, and yet is welcomed?
What's desired, yet chased away?
What's always carefully defended?
What's abused: condemned, I say?
What do you not dare appeal to?
What will all, happily, hear named?
What stands on the step before you?
What's banished from here, all the same?

THE EMPEROR

For once, at least, spare us your babble!
This is no time or place for riddles,
They're a matter for these gentlemen. –
Solve it! I'll gladly hear it all again.
I fear my old fool's wandered far in space:
Come to my side, here, and take his place.
Mephistopheles places himself on the Emperor's left.

MURMURS FROM THE CROWD

A newer fool – for newer cares –
Where's he from? – How'd he get there? –
The old one fell – He's all done in –
He was fat – Now this one's thin –

THE EMPEROR

So now, my faithful and beloved,
Welcome here from near and far!
We meet beneath a lucky star,
Since health and luck are written above.
But tell me, why in days like these,
When we've conquered care,
And carnival masks are all our wear,
And delightful things are waiting,

We trouble ourselves with debating?

Yet since you say we have to do it,

It's settled then, and we'll go to it.

THE CHANCELLOR

The highest virtue, like a sacred halo

Circles the Emperor's head: and so

He alone may validly exercise it:

Justice! – All men love and prize it,

What all ask, yet wish they could do without,

The people look to him to hand it out.

But ah! What help can human wit deliver,

Or kindly heart, or willing hand, if fever

Rages wildly through the state, and evil

Itself is broodingly preparing evil?

Look about, from this height's extreme,

Across the realm: it seems like some bad dream,

Where one deformity acts on another,

Where lawlessness by law is furthered,

And an age of crime is discovered.

Here one steals cattle, there, a wife,

Cross, cup and candlestick, from the altar,

And boasts of it for many a year,

His skin's intact, and so's his life.

Then they take their claims to court

The judge, in pomp, on his high cushion,

Meanwhile there grows a furious roar,

From swelling tides of revolution.

They insist it's crime and disgrace,

With their accomplices beside them,

And 'Guilty!' is the verdict in a case,

Only where Innocence is its own defence.
So all the world will slash and chop,
Destroying just what suits themselves:
How then can that true sense develop
That shows the morally acceptable?
At last the well-intentioned man
Yields to the bribe, the flatterer:
And the judge who can't convict, is hand
In hand with the criminal offender.
I've painted in black, but I'd rather draw
Its image in the deeper colour that I saw.

(Pause)

The conclusion's inescapable:
If all men suffer when all cause trouble,
Then His Majesty himself is harmed.
THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF
How riotous things are in this wild age!
They all lash out, and are lashed, these days,
And everyone is deaf to all command.
The citizen behind his wall,
The knight in his cliff-top tower,
Have sworn to defy us all,
And hold fast to their power.
The impatient mercenaries
Impetuously demand their pay,
And if we owed them less, already
They'd be off, and march away.
If one forbids what all desire,
He's disturbed a hornet's nest:
The kingdom, they should keep entire,

Is plundered, and distressed.

They'd like to wreak a wild disorder,

Half the world has been dissolved:

There are still kings beyond our border,

But none of them think they're involved.

THE TREASURER

In allies, then, who'd put their trust!

The subsidies they promised us,

Like water pipes are all blocked up.

And, Sire, in all your wide estate,

Who's benefited from the take?

Wherever you go, there's some new pup,

Who declares his independence.

We watch, while they carry on:

We've given away our rights, and hence,

No rights are left for us, not one.

Our parties too, however called,

Can't be depended on today:

They like to praise, and blame: it's all

Impartial both their love and hate.

They're resting: they take cover,

The Ghibelline, and Guelph.

Now, who'll help his neighbour?

Each man just helps himself.

The golden doors are fastened tight,

Men scrape and scratch and glean, all right,

But our coffers still are empty.

THE STEWARD

What evils, too, I must endure!

We try to save each day, I'm sure,

But every day sees greater need:
So, daily, some new torment's mine.
The cooks, alas, have all they want:
Boar, pheasant, hare and venison,
Ducks and peacocks, chickens, geese,
Payment in kind, and guaranteed,
They keep coming all the time,
But in the end we're short of wine.
Though cask on cask once filled the cellar,
The best of vintages, and names, there,
These noble lords can drink forever,
And haven't left a single drop.
The council too must have their fill,
They grasp their tankards tight until,
Under the table, they have to stop.
Now I'll count the cost, you'll see,
The moneylenders won't spare me,
The advances that they give gladly,
Will eat the future years, on top.
Pigs don't have time to fatten: instead
Men seize the pillows from your bed,
Even the bread from your table's gone.
THE EMPEROR (After reflection, to Mephistopheles.)
Fool, do you know anything else that's wrong?
MEPHISTOPHELES
Me? Nothing at all! I see splendour, as I must,
Around me, of you and yours! – Lack trust,
Where Majesty commands so, without question,
Where ready force scatters the enemy faction?
Where strong wills, with wit to understand,

Active and various, are all at hand?
What, for some evil purpose, could combine,
For darkness, then, where such stars shine?

MURMURS

Here's a rogue – who understands –
He'll tell lies – as long as he can –
I wonder too – what lies behind –
And what's in front? – A project of some kind –

MEPHISTOPHELES

In this world,
What isn't lacking, somewhere, though?
Sometimes it's this, or that: here what's missing's gold.
True you can't just rake it up from the floor,
But wisdom knows the mines where one gets more.
In mountain veins, foundation walls,
Coined and un-coined golden hoards,
And ask me, now, who'll bring it to the light:
One gifted with Mind's power and Nature's might.

THE CHANCELLOR

Mind and Nature – don't speak to Christians so.
That's why men burn atheists, below,
Such speech is dangerous, all right,
Nature is sin, and Mind's the devil,
It harbours within it, Doubt, that evil,
Their misshapen hermaphrodite.
Not so with us! – In the Emperor's land
Two kinds of men are still at hand
Worthy alone to defend the throne:
The Saints are they, and the Knights:
They enter life's uncertain fights,

Rewards of Church and State they own:

Firm in their resistance, check

The confused aims of everyman.

No, Nature and Mind are heretics!

Wizards! Ruining town and land.

And you, with brazen impudence still

Invoke them here in this high circle:

You're fostering the corrupted will,

Fools are always hand in hand.

MEPHISTOPHELES

By this I recognise a most learned lord!

What you can't feel lies miles abroad,

What you can't grasp, you think, is done with too.

What you don't count on can't be true,

What you can't weigh won't weigh, of old,

What you don't coin: that can't be gold.

THE EMPEROR

You won't sort out our faults like that,

Will Lenten sermons make men fat?

I'm tired of the eternal 'if and when':

We're short of gold, well fine, so fetch some then.

MEPHISTOPHELES

I'll fetch what you wish, and I'll fetch more:

Easy it's true, but then easy things weigh more:

It's there already, yet how we might achieve it,

That's the tricky thing, knowing how to seize it.

Just think how, in those times of consternation,

When a human flood drowned land and nation,

People were so terrified, everywhere,

They hid their treasures, here and there.

So it was when mighty Rome held sway,
And so it goes on, yesterday and today.
Still buried in the earth, why, there it is:

The earth is the Emperor's, so it's his.

THE TREASURER

For a Fool his aim's not out of sight:
It's true, that's an old Imperial right.

THE CHANCELLOR

Satan lays out his gilded nets, for you,
These things don't square with what's good and true.

THE STEWARD

Only bring them to court: I'll welcome the sight,
And I'll gladly accept the thing as not quite right.

THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF

The Fool's clever,
To promise what each of us needs:
A soldier will never ask from whence it all proceeds.

MEPHISTOPHELES

If you think I'm cheating you, maybe,
Why here's the man: ask Astrology!
He knows each circling hour and house:
So ask him: how are the Heavens now?

MURMURS

Two rogues, there – already known –
Fool and Dreamer – so near the throne –
An idle song – an ancient rhyme –
The Fool plays – the Wise Man speaks, in time –

THE ASTROLOGER (Speaks, with Mephistopheles prompting him.)

The Sun, himself, he is of purest gold:
Mercury, messenger, of riches told:

Venus has bewitched you all, and she
Looks on you, soon and late, quite lovingly:
The chaste Moon's mood holds fast:
Mars won't harm: his strength won't last:
And Jupiter remains the loveliest sight:
While Saturn's great, but far away and slight.
His metal we don't greatly venerate,
Light of worth, though leaden in its weight.
Yes! When Sun and Moon are conjoined fine,
Silver and gold will make the whole world shine:
The rest as well in turn are all achieved,
Palaces, gardens proud, and rosy cheeks:
All this he brings this highly knowledgeable man:
He can deliver, too, what nobody else here can.

THE EMPEROR

The words they say, I hear them twice,
And yet I'm not convinced they're right.

MURMURS

What's all that? - A joke gone flat –
Horoscopy – And Chemistry –
I've heard that vein – Hoped in vain –
Come, quick – It's still a trick –

MEPHISTOPHELES

They stand around: they're all amazed,
They don't trust what can be found,
One babbles about deadly nightshade,
The other of some jet-black hound.
What matter if one thinks I'm jesting,
Or another calls it sorcery,
If the soles of their feet are itching,

If their firm step totters towards me.
All can feel the secret working
Of Nature's everlasting power,
And from its deepest lurking,
A living vein shall rise and flower.
When every member twitches,
When all looks strange to your eyes,
Make up your minds, be delvers,
Here the players, there the prize!

MURMURS

It's like a lead-weight on my feet –
My arm's swollen – but then, it's gouty –
There's a tickle here in my big toe –
All the way down my back it goes –
From these signs, I'd say we're near
A rich vein of treasure, here.

THE EMPEROR

Quick then! Don't slope off there!
Let's test your froth of lies,
Show us, all, this rarest prize.
I'll lay down the sword and sceptre,
With my own noble hands, as well,
If you don't lie, complete the work myself,
And, if you lie, then send you down to Hell!

MEPHISTOPHELES

I'll find the way there anyway –
Yet I really can't exaggerate
What's lying round ownerless, everywhere.
The farmer, ploughing the furrows, lays bare
A crock of gold the clods unfold:

Seeks saltpetre from damp limy walls,
And finds there golden rolls of gold,
In his poor hands: frightened by all.
What caverns exist to be blown open,
Through what shafts and cuttings then,
Burrow those gold-divining men,
Those neighbours of the Underworld!
Secure in vast ancient cellars, find,
Golden plates, bowls, cups for wine,
In rows, and heaps where they were hurled:
Goblets fashioned out of rubies,
And if they wants to try their uses,
Beside them there's the ancient fluid.
Yet – I would trust the expert though –
The wooden casks rotted long ago,
The wine makes tartar, in the liquid.
Not just gold, and jewels, fine
But the essence then of noble wine
Terror hides, and night, as stark.
So quiz the wise untiringly:
It's trivial, by day, to see:
Mystery: houses in the dark.

THE EMPEROR

See to it then! What use is it out of sight?
Whatever's valuable must see the light.
Who knows a rogue for certain but by day?
At night all cows are black, and cats are grey.
The pots down there, full of golden weight –
Drive your plough, and, ploughing, excavate.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Take hoe and spade: and dig yourself,
Labouring will make you great,
A herd of golden calves, you'll help
To rise from out their buried state.
Then with delight, without delay,
You can, yourself, your love array:
Glittering colours, shining gems, will best
Enhance your majesty, and her loveliness.

THE EMPEROR

Quick then, quick! How slow it always is!

THE ASTROLOGER (Prompted by Mephistopheles.)

Sire, restrain your urgent passion, please.
First let all your pleasant pastimes go:
Distracted natures won't achieve the goal.
First we must atone for them in quiet,
Lower things are gained by the higher.
Who wants the good, must first be good:
Who wants delight, must calm the blood:
Who longs for wine, treads ripened grapes:
Who hopes for miracles, strengthens then his faith.

THE EMPEROR

So let the time be passed in merriment!
Ash Wednesday will achieve our grave intent.
And we can celebrate, wild Carnival,
More riotously, meanwhile, after all.
(They exit to the sound of trumpets.)

MEPHISTOPHELES

How merit and luck are linked together
These fools can't see, no, not a one:
If they'd the Philosopher's Stone, as ever,

There'd lack a philosopher for the stone.

**PART II ACT I SCENE III: A SPACIOUS HALL WITH ADJOINING
ROOMS**

Arranged and decorated for a Carnival Masque.

HERALD

In our German lands, fear no evil,
Dance of Death or Fool, or Devil:
There's a cheerful feast, here: wait.
Our Sire, on his Roman travels,
Has, for his profit, and our revels,
Crossed the highest Alpine levels,
And gained himself a happier State.
The Emperor kissed the holy slipper,
First, won sovereign rights, and as,
He was gifted with the crown, there,
Accepted a fool's cap, for us.
We're all newly born, now:
Every sophisticated man,
Pulls it snug over ears and brow:
He seems a poor fool, but he'll vow
To wear it wisely as he can.
I see they're gathering already,
Hesitant alone, or paired off intimately:
Chorus on chorus pushing through.
In, and out, quite undeterred:
And end up where they were before, too.
With its hundred thousand scenes of the absurd,
The World itself is just one giant Fool.

FLOWER GIRLS (Singing, accompanied by mandolins.)

Dressed to win your praises,
We are here tonight,
Young Florentine ladies,
At the German Court of light.
Many a bright flower we wear
To adorn our tawny hair:
Silken threads, silken gear,
They play their own part here.
Then our position's well deserved, oh,
Worth your praise, without a doubt,
Our shining-flowers, by hand we sew,
So they bloom year in, year out.
All kinds of coloured snippets,
Placed with perfect symmetry:
You might mock us bit by bit, yes,
But the whole attracts you see.
We are pretty things to look on,
Flower Girls, and very smart:
Then, the temperament of Woman
Is so very close to Art.

HERALD

Let's see those trays of flowers
That you carry on your heads,
That paint your arms with colours:
What each likes, let her select.
Quick: in walks and branches
What a garden we will share!
They are fit to crowd around us,
Flower sellers and their wares.

FLOWER GIRLS

Haggle in this cheerful place,
But seek no market here!
At a quick and witty pace,
Let all know what you bear.

AN OLIVE-BRANCH WITH OLIVES

I don't envy flowery ones,
Every kind of strife I shun:
It's unnatural, to me:
So I am the sign of nations,
And I seal their obligations,
Mark of peace in any field.
I hope I'm worth good luck today:
Some lovely head I might array.

A GARLAND OF WHEAT-EARS (Golden)

Ceres gift, for you to wear,
Charming, sweet, we were all sent:
The most desired of uses, here
As your beautiful adornment.

A FANCY GARLAND

Like a mallow, bright with colour,
A marvellous flower grew from the moss!
Never known before to Nature,
Yet Fashion brought it us.

A FANCY BOUQUET

My name's for you to know,
Theophrastus couldn't tell you though:
Yet I hope, if not all do,
Many of us will still please you,
She, I'd like, most to possess us,

Who might twine us in her tresses:
Or if she should so decide,
Set beside her heart, I'd ride.

ROSEBUDS

Many-coloured fancies may
Form the fashion of the day,
Strange and curious of shape,
Such as Nature never made:
Stalks of green and bells of gold,
Show in tresses all untold! –
Yet we – remain here, covered up:
Lucky those who first discover us.
When the summer is proclaimed,
Then the rosebuds are in flame,
Who would do without such pleasures?
Promises, and yielded treasures,
That, in the flowery kingdom, rule,
Mind and heart and glances, too.

(The Flower Girls garland themselves, and show their wares, gracefully, in the green leafy arcades).

THE GARDENERS (Singing, accompanied by lutes.)

See the flowers quietly growing,
On your brows, sweetly amuse you,
And their fruit will not seduce you,
One may taste delight in knowing.
Sunburned faces offer up,
Peaches, plums, and cherries, yet.
Buy! Against the tongue and palate,
The eye is the worst way to judge.
Come, of all this ripest fruit,

Eat with taste, and delight!
Poems on roses might still suit,
But on the apple man must bite.
So then let us join with their
Flowering youth itself,
And we'll dress our riper wares
In our neighbour's wealth.
Dressed in cheerful garlands, there,
Along this jewelled leafy route,
All things can be found together,
Buds and leaves, and flowers and fruit.

(Both choruses set out their goods on the flight of steps, with alternating song accompanied by the lutes and mandolins, and offer their wares to the spectators).

A MOTHER (With her daughter.)
Child, when you came to light,
I dressed you in your little hat:
Your face was so sweet and bright,
And your body was soft, at that.
I thought you'd soon be a bride,
To the wealthiest of men allied,
I thought you'd find a match.
Ah! Now already many a year
Has flown by, uselessly,
The motley crowd of suitors here,
Pass you quickly by, I see:
With him you danced a lively dance,
Gave that other a knowing glance
With your elbow, sharply.
I've thought about the many feasts

We went to, all in vain,
Forfeits, and Hide and Seek,
Couldn't help, that's plain:
Today the fools are out the trap,
Darling, open then your lap,
There's someone you can gain.

Other young and lovely girls join the Flower Girls, and they gossip together. Fishermen and bird-catchers with fishing rods, nests, limed twigs and other implements appear, and scatter themselves among the girls. Mutual attempts to win over, catch, escape and embrace, allow the most agreeable conversation.

WOOD-CUTTERS (Entering, loudly and boisterously.)

Make way! Stand back!

We must be free,

We fell the trees,

They crash, and smash:

And when we pass,

Expect a smack.

To give us praise

Consider this:

If coarser ways,

Weren't in this land,

How'd the finest,

Have means to stand,

Despite they're jesting?

So learn our meaning!

For you'd be freezing,

If we weren't sweating.

PULCINELLI

You're fools, a troop,

That's born to stoop.

We're the wise,
We see through lies:
And then our bags
Our caps and rags,
Are light to wear:
And free from care,
We're always idle,
Slippered, we sidle,
Through market crowds,
Slithering about,
Standing to gaze,
And croak, amazed:
And at that sound,
Through heaving mounds,
Eel-like slipping,
Lightly skipping,
We romp together.
Praise us ever,
Or scold us so,
We let both go.

THE PARASITICAL (Fawning, and lustful.)

You brave woodsmen,
And your next of kin,
The charcoal-burners,
You're the men for us.
Since all the stooping,
The ready nodding,
The winding phrase,
That plays both ways,
That warms or chills,

Just as one feels,
What profit is it then?
The mighty fire
From heaven or higher,
Might come in vain
Without logs again,
And coal heaps there,
To light the oven
And make it glare.
It roasts and steams,
It boils and teems.
The finger-picker,
The plate-licker,
He sniffs the fry,
Suspects the fish:
Rules, by and by,
The patron's dish.
A DRUNK (Confused.)
Nothing seems bad to me today!
I feel so frank, and free:
New joys, and happy songs, I say.
I brought them both with me!
So let's drink! Drink, and drink!
Drink up, you! Clink, and clink!
You behind me, come around!
Drink it up, and send it down.
My wife was so outraged, she screamed,
When I turned up, dressed so funny,
However much I boasted, she
Kept calling me a tailor's dummy.

So I drink! Drink, and drink!
Clink the tankards! Clink, and clink!
Tailor's dummy: swill it round!
When it's clinked, drink it down!
Don't you say, I've lost my way:
I'm here, where I've got it made.
If host and hostess won't play,
I'll get credit from the maid.
Always drinking! Drink, and drink!
Lift, you others! Clink, and clink!
Each to each! So it goes round!
Too soon, I know, it's all gone down.
However I please myself, may I
Have it happen at my command:
Let me lie here, where I lie,
If I can't, any longer, stand.

CHORUS

Every pal, now: drink and drink!
A toast again, a clink and clink!
Hold tight now to bench and ground!
Under the table, he'll be found.

The Herald announces sundry poets – Poets of Nature, and Court, and Minstrels, Sentimentalists and Enthusiasts. In this competitive crowd no one allows anyone else to start reciting. One slips by with a few words.

A SATIRICAL POET

As a poet, do you know
What I'd most enjoy, here?
If I dared to sing, or bellow
What no one wants to hear.

The Night and Church Poets excuse themselves having become engaged in

a very interesting conversation with a newly-risen Vampire, from which a new school of poetry might derive. The Herald has to accept their excuses, and meanwhile calls on characters from Greek Mythology, who even in modern masks lose neither their character nor power to charm.

The Three Graces appear.

AGLAIA

Grace it is we bring, to living:

So be graceful in your giving.

HEGEMONE

Gracefully may you receive:

Lovely is the wish achieved.

EUPHROSYNE

And in quieter hours, and places,

Chiefly, in your thanks, be gracious.

The Three Fates appear

ATROPOS

I, the eldest, I, the spinning

Am lumbered with this time: I've

Need of lots of pondering, thinking,

To yield the tender threads of life.

So you may be soft and supple,

I sift through the finest flax:

Drawn through clever fingers, double

Fine, and even, smooth as wax.

If you wish all joy and dancing,

Excessive now, in what you take,

Think about those threads: their ending.

Then, take care! The threads might break.

CLOTHO

Know that in these latter days,

I was trusted with the shears:
Since our eldest sister's ways,
Failed to help men, it appears.
She dragged all her useless spinning,
Endlessly to air and light,
While the hopes of wondrous winnings,
Were clipped and buried out of sight.

I too made a host of errors:
Myself, in my younger years,
But, to keep myself in check, there's
The case, in which I keep my shears.
And so, willingly restrained,
I look kindly on this place,
In these hours, your freedom gained,
Run on and on, at your wild pace.

LACHESIS

I, the only one with sense,
To twist the threads am left:
My ways brook no nonsense,
I've never hurried yet.
Threads they come, threads I wind,
Guiding each one on its track,
Letting no thread wander blind,
Twining each one in the pack.
If I, once, forgot myself, my fears
For the world would give me pause:
Counting hours, measuring years,
So the Weaver holds her course.

HERALD

You wouldn't recognise the ones who come now,

However much you know of ancient troubles,
To look at them, the cause of many evils,
You'd call them welcome guests, and bow.
They're the Furies: no one will believe me,
Pretty, shapely, friendly, young in years:
But meet with them, you'll quickly learn I fear,
How serpent-like these doves are to hurt freely.
Though they're malicious, in modernity,
Where fools now boast about their sinful stories,
They too have ceased to want the Angels' glories:
Confess themselves the plague of land and city.
The Furies approach.

ALECTO

What does that matter? You still believe in us:
Then, we're pretty, young, and fawning kittens:
If one of you has a lover, with whom he's smitten,
We'll tickle his ears at length, sweetly fuss,
Till it would be safe to tell him, eye to eye,
That she waves to him, and him, the same,
She's thick up top, a crooked back, and lame,
And married, she'd be no good, by and by.
We know how to pester the bride-to-be as well:
Scarcely a week ago, her lover himself,
Said nasty things to her about herself! –
They're reconciled, but something rankles still.

MEGAERA

That's a joke! Let them be married, any way,
I'll take it up, and know, whatever may befall,
Through wilfulness the sweetest joys will pall,
Man's changeable, and changeable the day.

And no one holds the desired one in his arms,
Without longing, foolishly, for the more-desired,
Leave's his good fortune, with which he was fired:
Flies from the sun, and asks the frost for warmth.
I know how to give birth to those things: there,
Is Asmodi, who is my faithful servant,
To work true mischief at the proper moment,
And send to ruin all Mankind, in pairs.

TISIPHONE

Instead of malice: poison and the knife
I'm mixing, sharpening for that betrayer:
Love another, and sooner now or later,
Ruin itself will penetrate your life.
Gall and wormwood they must roam
Through all those sweetest moments!
No bargaining here, no bartering, come –
The perpetrator must atone.
Let no one sing about forgiveness!
I cry my cause to the cliffs again,
Echo! Hear! Reply: Avenge!
Let him who alters, cease existence.

THE HERALD

I'll ask you please, to move aside,
Since what comes next, is otherwise.
You can see, here's a mountain coming,
Decked with princely coloured trappings,
A tusked head, snaking trunk, there too,
A mystery, but I'll reveal the key to you.
A delicate and dainty girl sits on its neck,
And with a thin wand keeps the beast in check:

Another, up there, standing, wonderfully,
Surrounded with light, almost blinding me.
Beside it, two girls walk in chains, one fearful,
While the other girl seems quite cheerful:
One wishes to be, and one feels she is, free.
Let each of them declare who they might be.

FEAR

Smoking torches, flares and lights,
Are burning at the troubled feast:
Among all these deceptive sights,
Ah, I'm held fast by the feet.
Away, you ridiculous smilers!
I suspect those grins so bright:
All my enemies, beguilers,
Press towards me through the night.
Here! A friend becomes a foe,
Yet I know that mask, I'd say:
One that wants to kill me, though,
Now unmasked he creeps away.
Gladly, heedless of direction
I'd escape from out this world:
But, beyond, there roars destruction:
In mists of terror I am furred.

HOPE

I greet you, sisters! Though today,
And the whole of yesterday,
You enjoyed the masquerade,
I know all will be displayed:
In the morning you'll unveil.
And if, in the torchlight, we

Don't feel particular delight,
Yet the days to come, so bright,
More wholly suited, we shall hail,
Now as one, now solitary,
Through fair fields, we'll roam loose,
To act, or rest, as we choose,
And in that carefree way of living,
Dispense with nothing, go on striving:
Guests are welcome everywhere,
Confidently, let's appear:
Surely, the best anywhere,
Must be somewhere, here.

INTELLIGENCE

Two of Man's worst enemies,
Fear and Hope, I bind for you,
Now this country worries me.
Make room! I'll rescue you.
I lead the living Colossus,
Turret-crowned, as you see,
Step by step, he crosses,
The highest passes, tirelessly.
But above me, on the summit,
Is a goddess, there, who's bearing
Outspread wings, and turns about,
Everywhere, to see who's winning.
Ringed by splendour, and by glory,
Shining far, on every side:
She calls herself – Victory,
Goddess of the active life.

ZOILO-THERSITES (An Ugly Dwarfish Warrior.)

Ah, ha! I've come just in time,
I hold you all guilty of crime!
Yet my goal I assume to be
Her up there: Queen Victory.
With her pair of snowy wings,
She's an eagle, she must think:
And that whenever she's on hand,
To her belong the folk and land:
But when famous deeds are done,
At once I'm here with armour on,
When low is high, and high is low,
Bent is straight, and straight not so,
That alone fills me with mirth,
I wish it so throughout the Earth.

THE HERALD

So I'll lend you, dog from birth,
This good baton's masterstroke!
Twist and turn now: it's no joke! –
See how the twin dwarfish ape,
Rolls into a foul lumpish shape!
A wonder – the lump's an egg, on cue,
It swells and then it cracks in two:
Now a pair of twins appear,
An adder and a bat roll clear.
One through the dust is swiftly winding,
The black one's flitting round the ceiling.
They hurry outside, in company,
I wouldn't choose to be number three.

MURMURS

Lively now! There's dancing there –

No! I'd much rather be elsewhere—
Can't you feel some ghostly race
Fly about us, through this place? —
Something just rushed through my hair —
Round my feet, it's flying, where? —
None of us are injured though —
But we all are frightened so —
All the fun is spoilt completely —
As those creatures wished, you see.

THE HERALD

Since I play the herald's role,
As this masquerade unfolds,
I watch sternly at the door,
In case some devious outlaw
To this happy place, comes creeping:
Never yielding, never wavering.
Through the window, though, I fear
Airborne spectres enter here:
From magic and from devilry
Alas, I cannot set you free.
All this makes the dwarf suspicious,
Now! From behind, a new masque issues.
And I must dutifully explain
The meaning of the forms, again.
But I can't easily announce
What cannot be understood:
Help me explain it, if you would! —
See it wander through the crowd?
A splendid chariot, a four-in-hand,
Rolling through them, where they stand:

But it doesn't split the people,
I see no one's crushed at all.
Colours glitter in the distance,
Sundry wandering stars for instance,
A magic-lantern-like performance.
It blows along, a storm's assault.
Make way, there! I shudder!

THE BOY CHARIOTEER

Halt!

Dragons, your wings restrain,
Feel your accustomed rein,
Control yourselves, if I control you,
Sweep away when I inspire you –
Let us do honour to this place!
Look round, a widening display
Of admirers, circle now on circle.
Herald, now, then! As you will,
Before we leave you all,
Describe us, and say our name:
Since we're allegorical,
You should know us, plain.

THE HERALD

No, indeed, I can't tell your name:
I'll try and describe you all the same.

THE BOY CHARIOTEER

So try!

THE HERALD

I must confess
To young and handsome, before the rest.

You're a half-grown boy: yet a woman
Would prefer to see you fully grown.
You seem to me a wooer, in future,
Out of her house, a real seducer.

THE BOY CHARIOTEER

Let's hear more! Go on: go on,
Find the riddle's bright solution.

THE HERALD

Dark eyes that shine: night-black hair
Which brightly jewelled bands enclose:
And what a dainty garment flows
From shoulder down to ankle, there:
With purple hem its glittering shows!
One might take you for a girl:
Yet for good or ill, you'd be,
Prized already by any girl,
She'd teach you your ABC.

THE BOY CHARIOTEER

And he, who like a splendid vision,
Sits on the chariot, enthroned there?

THE HERALD

He seems a king, a rich and kind one,
Blessed are they who gain his favour!
He has no further need to strive,
His eyes observe whatever's lacking,
And to spread his pure delight,
Is more to him than joy and owning.

THE BOY CHARIOTEER

You daren't stop there:
What you see, you must describe it precisely.

THE HERALD

I can't express all the dignity.
But the glowing moon face, I see,
The full mouth, the bright cheeks, then
That shine beneath the jewelled turban:
Rich comfort in the clothes he's wearing!
What shall I say about his bearing?
As a ruler he seems known to me.

THE BOY CHARIOTEER

Plutus the God of Riches, this is he!
He's come himself in all his splendour,
The Emperor wished greatly he were here.

THE HERALD

Explain your own what and how to me!

THE BOY CHARIOTEER

I am Extravagance: I am Poetry:
I am the Poet, who is self-perfected
When his special gift is squandered.
Yet I'm immeasurably wealthy,
Like Plutus, worth as much as he,
I adorn, enliven, dance and feast,
And whatever he lacks, I complete.

HERALD

Your boasting makes you handsomer,
But let's see all your skill appear.

THE BOY CHARIOTEER

Just watch me snap my fingers, now,
The chariot will gleam and glow.
There a string of pearls appear!

(He continues to snap his fingers, in all directions.)

Golden jewels for neck and ear:
Flawless combs and diadems,
Set in a ring, rare precious gems:
I scatter flames too, here and there,
Waiting for their chance to flare.

THE HERALD

How the dear crowd snatch, I see!
The giver's soon in difficulty.
He snaps out jewels, as in a dream,
And they all snatch them, in a stream.
But now a different trick, you see:
What each has grasped so eagerly,
Has gained him but a poor reward,
The gifts already fluttering skyward.
The pearls are loosened from their band,
And beetles crawl there in his hand,
The poor man shakes them off, instead
They're humming now around his head.
Another, for some solid thing,
Catches at a butterfly's wing.
That's what the rascal's promise means:
He only lends them golden gleams!

THE BOY CHARIOTEER

You know how to announce masks:
It's true, but it's not the herald's task to search below
The outer surface of existence:
That requires a keener sense.
Still I'm wary of all disputes.
Lord, I'll direct my speech and questioning to you.
(Turning towards Plutus.)

Have you not trusted me with the task, to stand
And guide the tempest of your four-in-hand?
Don't I steer well, as you direct?
Am I not there, when you expect?
And don't I know how to win
The palm, for you, on daring wing?
When I've fought for you in war, now,
I've been successful every time:
When laurel wreaths adorn your brow
Have I not fashioned them with hand and mind?

PLUTUS

If I'm required to be a witness to it,
I'd say: You are the spirit of my spirit.
You always act according to my wishes,
And as I gain myself, you too are richer.
To reward your services, I value now
The green branch higher than my crown.
One true word, then, for everyone:
I've found delight in you, dear Son.

THE BOY CHARIOTEER

The greatest gifts from my hand,
See! I've scattered them around.
On every head there's the glow
Of some little flame I throw:
Leaping from one brow to another,
Halts on him, then leaves his brother,
But rarely does the flame-let rise,
And briefly flower in bright skies:
For many, before they know, it's vanished,
Sadly, it's burnt out, and finished.

WOMEN (Chatting to each other.)

Up there, on the four-in-hand,
He's certainly a charlatan:
And there's a clown perched behind,
By hunger and thirst he's been refined,
Like nothing one's ever seen before:
Pinch, and he'll feel nothing at all.

THE STARVELING

Disgusting women, leave me alone!
Not to come here again, I'll know.
When women kept to their hearths, then
Avaritia, Greed: was my name:
The houses were fine, all about,
Lots came in, nothing went out!
I took care of cupboard and chest:
That was a burden, to top the rest.
But now in this younger age,
Wives don't know how to save,
And like all those wicked students,
They have more desires than 'talents',
And their men have much to suffer,
Their debts are left about all over.
They spend whatever they can extract,
On their lovers, and on their backs:
They eat of the best, and drink deeper,
With their wretched army of admirers:
Which adds to the value of gold, for me:
We're manly fellows, the Miserly!

LEADER OF THE WOMEN

Let dragon be miserly with dragon:

In the end it's merely lies, illusion!
Men flock around, and turn the charm on,
But they're soon annoyance and confusion.

THE CROWD OF WOMEN

That Scarecrow! Give him a poke!
What's the Wooden Rake threaten?
We'll all shun his ugly looks, then!
Dragons of wood and paper: a joke!
Look lively, now, and we'll do him in!

THE HERALD

By my wand! Keep the peace! –
Though there's no need for my assistance:
Look at those grim monsters, how each
Clears round itself a proper distance,
Unfolding its quadruple wings, the beast.
The dragons shake themselves, indignant,
With fiery throats, their tails rampant:
The place is cleared: the people flee.
Plutus descends from the chariot.

THE HERALD

He steps down, in a kingly manner!
He beckons, and the dragons stir:
From the chariot bearing Avarice,
And gold, down comes the chest,
See, there at his feet, it's landed:
It's a wonder how it happened.

PLUTUS (To the Boy Charioteer)

Now you've left that troubling burden here,
You're free: so, fly now to your own sphere!
Not this! Where, confused, motley, wild,

Distorted objects crowd around us, child.

No: where you see clear, with sweetest Clarity,
Self-possessed, trusting in your own self: flee,
Where Goodness and Beauty may be viewed,
And there create your world – in Solitude!

THE BOY CHARIOTEER

So, I'll be your worthy envoy then,
So, I'll love you like my dearest kin.
Where you live, is Plenty: and where
I am, all feel they gain in splendour.
And often hesitate in life's uncertainty:
Should they yield to you, or yield to me?
Certainly your followers will have rest:
Who follows me, with work's forever blessed.
My actions are never kept a secret,
I only have to breathe and I'm apparent.
Farewell, then! You granted me my joy:
But whisper low, and you shall have your boy!
(He exits as he came.)

PLUTUS (Faust in disguise.)

And now it's time to reveal the treasure!
I strike the lock with the herald's wand.
It's open! Look! Vessels of noblest measure,
Pour the golden blood through your hands,
First it swells, roars, writhes as if it's molten:
A jewelled hoard of crowns, rings, and chains.

VARIOUS SHOUTS FROM THE CROWD

Look here, oh, there!
How rich it flows:
The chest, right to the brim, it glows. –

Golden vessels, molten too,
Rolls of coins, turning too. –
Minted ducats leaping,
Oh, how my heart is beating –
I see all, for which I'm yearning,
On the floor there, burning! –
It's offered you, don't be a fool,
Be rich, you only need to stoop. –
For, quick as lightning, all the rest,
Will take possession of the chest.

THE HERALD

What's this, you Fools? Ah, yes,
It's no more than a maskers' jest.
Tonight, don't ask for any more:
Think you, we'd give you golden ore?
In this game there are any amount
Of pennies: too many for you to count.
You clumsy idiots! A fine appearance,
Seems, to you, truth's naked essence.
What is your Truth? – Hollow illusion
Grasps you, with its fool's cap on. –
Heroic Mask, Plutus that conceals,
Drive these folk, then, from the field.

PLUTUS

Your wand's best by a mile,
Lend it me for a little while. –
I'll dip it, quick, in heat and glow. –
You Maskers, all take care then, now!
It gleams and bursts and throws off sparks!
The wand already shines in the dark.

And anyone who gets too near me,
Will be scorched, as well, mercilessly. –
And now I'll sweep with my brand.

SHOUTS AND CONFUSION

Ah! We're done for every man. –
Fly, now, whoever can! –
Back, back, the hindmost man! –
It's shining brightly in my eyes. –
On me the wand's hot weight lies –
We're all lost, lost for good. –
Back, back, you masks in flood!
Back, back, you senseless mob! –
If I'd wings, I'd soar aloft. –

PLUTUS

The circle backwards sinks,
Yet no one's scorched, I think.
The crowd will now give way,
They're only scared I'd say. –
But to guarantee good order,
I'll mark out an unseen border.

THE HERALD

You've done a fine job all right,
Thanks to your cunning, and might.

PLUTUS

Noble friend, you'll still need patience:
All kinds of turmoil still threaten us.

AVARICE

Now, if it pleases you, you may
Cast your eye around with pleasure:
The women are to the fore as ever,

Where they can nibble things, or gaze.
Still, I'm not completely rusty!
A lovely woman's always lovely:
And since, today, it costs me nothing,
With confidence, I too go wooing.
Still, here, in such a crowded space,
Lest words fall in an idle place,
I'll try being clever, attempt success,
And in clear mime make my address.
Hands, feet, gesturing won't cut the ice,
So, I'll have to employ a comical device.
I'll shape the gold like moistened clay,
Since the metal's malleable anyway.

THE HERALD

What's he up to that skinny Fool!
Is there a jest in the starveling too?
He kneads the gold just like dough,
It's soft between his hands, although
However he squeezes and forms it all,
It still remains a shapeless ball.
He turns now towards the women,
They all scream, and start to run,
Gesturing in complete disgust:
That rascal's up to no good.
I fear he'll be in ecstasy
If he can offend morality.
I shan't remain silent, anyway
Give me the wand: I'll drive him away.

PLUTUS

He doesn't see what we threaten here:

Let him pursue his foolishness!

There'll be no room left for his excess:

The law is great, but necessity's greater.

TUMULT AND SINGING

The wild crowd come here, specially,

From mountain-top, and wooded valley,

Shouting forcefully, as they can:

They celebrate the great god Pan.

They know what none can know,

And into the empty circle flow.

PLUTUS

'I know you well, and your great Pan!

Together these daring steps you plan.

I know all that no one knows,

And clear for you this narrow close.'

May good fortune follow them too!

The strangest things may happen:

They don't know where they're going to:

Since they never look before them.

WILD SINGING

You plaster people: you tinsel show!

Rough and coarse is how they go,

Leaping: wild is their track ahead,

Solid and sturdy is their tread.

FAUNS

The Faun flocks

In happy dance,

Oaken garlands,

On curling locks,

Fine pointed ears

Through tangled hair,
Snub noses, faces broad and flat,
The women can't fault any of that:
When the Fauns begin to prance,
The loveliest won't scorn the dance.

A SATYR

The Satyr's leaping here behind,
Goat's foot, and lean of thigh,
Sinewy, skinny he'll go by,
And chamois-like, on mountain height,
He looks around, and takes delight.
He's alive in the free air,
Mocks at man, child, woman there,
Who deep in the valley's damp flue,
Think, cosily, they're living too,
While, still pure and undisturbed,
To him alone is the upper world.

THE GNOMES

The little crowd trips by there,
They don't like to travel in pairs:
In mossy clothes with lanterns bright,
They pass together, quick and light,
Each one passing on his own,
Like glowing ants swarming home:
And always busy, here and there,
Industrious, and everywhere.
Kin to the 'Little People', known
As surgeons to the rock and stone:
'We bleed the mountains high,
We drain the deep veins dry:

We hurl the metals round,
With hearty greetings: Luck! Well found!
And it's always kindly meant: again,
We're the friends of all good men.
Yet we the gold to light deliver,
So men may steal, and covet ever,
So princely hand won't lack the steel
That worldwide murder longs to deal.
Who those three commandments breaks
Scant heed of the other seven takes.
But of all that we're innocent:
About it all, like us, be patient.'

THE GIANTS

The wild men, we are named,
Known in all the Hartz range:
Natural, plain, in all our antics,
Appearing frightfully gigantic.
A fir-tree trunk in each right hand,
Round our body a thick band,
A solid apron of branches, not
The bodyguard the Pope has got.

NYMPHS IN CHORUS (Surrounding Great Pan, who is the masked Emperor.)

Here he'll stand! –
The world's All,
Is shown to all,
In mighty Pan.
You the happiest, surround him,
In magic dances soar around him:
Here now, serious and good, he

Wishes all men to be happy.
Under the curving roof of blue
He seems endlessly wakeful, too,
Yet the streams flow gently for him,
And the breezes gently rock him,
And, when he sleeps at noon, the leaf
Is motionless in the branches' wreath:
The rich plants' fragrant balsams there
Fill all the still and silent air:
The Nymph no longer dares to leap,
And where she stands, falls fast asleep.
But when his powerful shout,
Unexpectedly, rings out,
Like thunder crack, or wave's roar,
Who knows what's happening any more,
The army's witless in the fight,
The hero in battle's filled with fright.
So honour him, where honour's due,
And hail him, who led us to you!

A DEPUTATION OF GNOMES (To Great Pan.)

When the rich and shining goods,
Spread threadlike through the deep,
Then delicate divining rods,
Reveal what labyrinths keep.
Bending in our dark vaults, there,
As troglodytes we're measured,
While in the purest daylight air,
Gracious, you divide the treasure.
Now we find we've discovered
A marvellous fountain here,

Promising, easily, to deliver
Things that infrequently appear.
It all waits for your command:
Master, take and care for it: do.
Every treasure in your hand,
Helps the whole world too.

PLUTUS (To the Herald.)

We must grasp things in the highest sense,
And let what may come, come, with confidence.
You've shown the highest courage once before.
So now too what is fearful, we must try it:
World, and posterity, will stubbornly deny it,
So pen it faithfully in your report.

THE HERALD (Grasping the wand in Plutus' hand, and assisting with the Masquerade.)

The dwarves lead on great Pan,
Gently, to the fiery fountain:
It boils from the deep profound,
Then sinks again, through the ground,
And gloomy is its open round:
Yet shows again the heat and glow.
Great Pan stands there, well disposed,
Pleased with all this wondrous thing,
Pearl foam, right, left, showering.
How can he trust such a show?
He bends to look inside, and so,
His beard gets caught within! –
Who's made that hairless chin?
His hand hides it from our vision. –
What follows is all clumsy action:

The beard, on fire, flies back, soon
Scorching garland, chest and head:
Delight is turned to pain instead. –
They rush to quench it all again,
But none of them are free of flames,
And how they flare and dart,
Exciting fire in every part:
Wreathed in that element,
The whole masked crowd is burnt.
But what's all this news about,
Ear after ear, mouth after mouth!
O eternally unlucky night
So little of it's turned out right!
Tomorrow's dawn will declare
What nobody wants to hear:
In every ear we'll hear it plain:
'The Emperor is in such pain.'
O, would that it were something other!
Burnt, Emperor and Court together.
Cursed be those who led him astray,
In resinous twigs did him array,
To rage, and bellow out that song,
To the ruin of all that throng.
O Youth, Youth will you never
Restrict joy's purest measure?
O Power, Power, will you never,
Sense and Omnipotence treasure?
The 'forest' too is soon in flames,
The pointed tongues play their games,
To the real wooden beams lick higher:

We're threatened by universal fire.
The cup of misery overflows,
Who will save us? No one knows.
See, Imperial splendour, by dawn's light,
Turned to a heap of ash, in a single night.

PLUTUS

That's enough terror overhead,
Let help arrive here, instead! –
Strike, you heavenly wand, with power,
So the earth will ring and tremor!
You, the wide realms of air,
Fill with cool fragrance there!
Hurry down, to sweep around us,
Cloudy mists and swelling vapours,
Quench the thronging flames!
Murmuring, trickling, fogs gather,
Sliding, rolling, softly drenching,
Slipping everywhere, and quenching.
You, the moist, who soothe forever,
Change them all to gleaming weather,
All these empty fiery games! –
Threatening Spirits, that would harm,
We, by magic, will disarm.

**PART II ACT I SCENE IV: A PLEASURE GARDEN IN THE
MORNING SUN**

The Emperor, his Court, Noblemen and Ladies: Faust and Mephistopheles
dressed fashionably but not ostentatiously, both kneel.

FAUST

Sire, forgive the fiery conjuring tricks?

THE EMPEROR (Beckoning to him to rise.)

More fun, in that vein, would be my wish. –

At once, I saw myself in a glowing sphere,

It seemed as if I were divine Pluto, there.

A rocky depth of mine, and darkness, lay

Glowing with flame: out of each vent played

A thousand wild and whirling fires,

And flickered in the vault together, higher,

Licking upwards to the highest dome,

That now seemed there, and now was gone.

Through a far space wound with fiery pillars,

I saw a long line of people approach us,

Crowding till they formed a circle near,

And paid me homage, as they do forever.

From Court, I knew one face, and then another's,

I seemed the Prince of a thousand salamanders.

MEPHISTOPHELES

You are, Sire! Since every element

Knows your Majesty, amongst all men.

You've now proved the fire obedient:

Leap in the sea, in its wildest torrent,

You'll barely touch its pearl-strewn bed,

A noble dome will rise round you, instead:

You'll see green translucent waves swelling

Purple edged, to make the loveliest dwelling,

And you will be its centre. At each step

Wherever you go, the palace follows yet,

The very walls themselves delight in life,

Flash to and fro, in swarming arrow-flight.

Sea-wonders crowd around this sweet new sight,
Shoot past, still not allowed to enter quite.
There, golden-scaled, bright sea-dragons play,
The shark gapes wide, you smile in his face.
However much your court attracts you now,
You've never seen such an amazing crowd.
Nor will you part there from the loveliest:
The Nereids will be gathering, curious,
To this wondrous house, in seas eternally fresh,
The youngest shy and pleasure-loving, like fish,
The old ones: cunning. Thetis at the news,
Gives hand and lips to this second Peleus. –
A seat there, on the height of Olympus, too...

THE EMPEROR

I'll leave the airy spaces all to you:
Soon enough we'll be climbing to that throne.

MEPHISTOPHELES

And, Sire, the Earth already is your own!

THE EMPEROR

What brought you here, now: what good fortune,
Straight from the Thousand Nights and One?

If you're as fertile as Scheherezade
I'll guarantee you a sublime reward.

Be ready then, when your world's light,
As it often does, disappoints me quite.

THE STEWARD (Entering hastily.)

Your Supreme Highness, I never thought
To announce such luck, the finest wrought,
As this is, for me the greatest blessing,
Which I've revealed in your presence:

For debt after debt I've accounted,
The usurer's claws now are blunted,
I'm free of Hell's pain, and then,
It can't be any brighter in Heaven.

THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF (Follows hastily.)

Something's paid of what we owe,
The Army's all renewed their vow,
The Cavalry's fresh blood is up,
And girls and landlords can sup.

THE EMPEROR

Now your chests breathe easier!
Now your furrowed brows are clear!
How quickly you hurried to the hall!

THE TREASURER (Appearing.)

Ask them: it was they who did it all.

FAUST

It's right the Chancellor should read the page.

THE CHANCELLOR (Coming forward slowly.)

I'm happy enough to do so, in my old age. –

See and hear the scroll, heavy with destiny,

That's changed to happiness, our misery.

'To whom it concerns, may you all know,

This paper's worth a thousand crowns, or so.

As a secure pledge, it will underwrite,

All buried treasure, our Emperor's right.

Now, as soon as the treasure's excavated,

It's taken care of, and well compensated.'

THE EMPEROR

I smell a fraud, a monstrous imposture!

Who forged the Emperor's signature?

Have they gone unpunished for their crime?

THE TREASURER

Remember! You yourself it was that signed:

Last night. You acted as great Pan,

Here's how the Chancellor's speech began:

'Grant yourself this great festive pleasure,

The People's Good: a few strokes of the feather.'

You wrote it here, and while night ruled the land,

A thousand artists created another thousand,

So all might benefit from your good deed,

We stamped the whole series with your screed,

Tens, Thirties, Fifties, Hundreds, all are done.

You can't think how well the folk get on.

See your city once half-dead with decay,

Now all's alive, enjoying its new day!

Though your name's long filled the world with glee,

They've never gazed at it so happily.

Now the alphabet's superfluous,

In these marks there's bliss for all of us.

THE EMPEROR

And my people value it as gold, you say?

The Court and Army treat it as real pay?

Then I must yield, though it's wonderful to me.

THE STEWARD

It was impossible to catch the escapee:

It flashed like lightning through the land:

The moneychanger's shops are jammed,

Men pay, themselves, the papers mount

They're gold and silver, and at a discount.

Now used by landlords, butchers, bakers:

Half the world think they're merrymakers,
The others, newly clothed, are on show.
The drapers cut the cloth: the tailors sew.
The toast is 'Hail, the Emperor!' in the bars,
With cooking, roasting, tinkling of jars.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Strolling, lonely, on the terrace,
You see a beauty, smartly dressed,
One eye hidden by her peacock fan,
She smiles sweetly, looks at your hand:
And, quicker than wit or eloquence,
Love's sweetest favour's arranged at once.
You're not plagued with pouch or wallet,
A note beneath the heart, install it,
Paired with love-letters, conveniently.
The priest carries his in a breviary,
And wouldn't the soldier be quicker on his way,
With a lighter belt around his middle, say.
Your Majesty will forgive me if, in miniature,
I produce a low note, in our high adventure.

FAUST

The wealth of treasure that solidifies,
That in your land, in deep earth lies,
Is all unused. In our boldest thought,
Such riches are only feebly caught:
Imagination, in its highest flight,
Strives to, but can't reach that height.
But grasping Spirits, worthy to look deeply,
Trust in things without limit, limitlessly.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Such paper's convenient, for rather than a lot
Of gold and silver, you know what you've got.
You've no need of bartering and exchanging,
Just drown your needs in wine and love-making.
If you lack coin, there's moneychangers' mile,
And if it fails, you dig the ground a while.
Cups and chains are auctioned: well,
Since the paper, in this way, pays for itself,
It shames the doubters, and their acid wit,
People want nothing else, they're used to it.
So now in all of your Imperial land
You've gems, gold, paper enough to hand.

THE EMPEROR

The Empire thanks you deeply for this bliss:
We want the reward to match your service.
We entrust you with the riches underground,
You are the best custodians to be found.
You know the furthest well-concealed hoard,
And when men dig, it's you must give the word.
You masters of our treasure, then, unite,
Accept your roles with honour and delight:
They make the Underworld, and the Upper,
Happy in their agreement, fit together.

THE TREASURER

No dispute will divide us in the future:
I'm happy to have a wizard for a partner.
(He exits with Faust.)

THE EMPEROR

Now, presents for the court: everyone
Confess to me whatever it is you want.

A PAGE (Accepting his present.)

I'll live well, happy, have the best of things.

ANOTHER (Also.)

I'll quickly buy my lover chains and rings.

A CHAMBERLAIN

I'll drink wines that are twice as fine.

A SECOND CHAMBERLAIN

The dice in my pockets itch I find.

A KNIGHT (Thoughtfully.)

My lands and castle will be free of debt.

A SECOND KNIGHT

It's treasure: a second treasure I will get.

THE EMPEROR

I hoped for desire and courage for new deeds:

But whoever knows you, thinks you slight indeed.

I see, clearly: despite this treasure and more,

You're all the same, still, as you were before.

THE FOOL (Recovered, and approaching the throne.)

You're handing presents out: give me one too!

THE EMPEROR

Alive again? You'd drink it all you fool.

THE FOOL

Magic papers! I don't understand them, truly.

THE EMPEROR

That I'd believe: you'll only use them badly.

THE FOOL

Others are falling: I don't know what to do.

THE EMPEROR

Just pick them up: those are all yours too.

(The Emperor exits.)

THE FOOL

Five thousand crowns I'm holding, in my hand!

MEPHISTOPHELES

You two-legged wineskin, so you still stand?

THE FOOL

I've had my luck, but this is the best yet.

MEPHISTOPHELES

You're so delighted: look, it's made you sweat.

THE FOOL

But see here, is it truly worth real gold?

MEPHISTOPHELES

You've there just what belly and throat are owed.

THE FOOL

And can I buy a cottage, cow and field?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Why yes! There's nothing to it: make a bid.

THE FOOL

A castle: with forests, hunting, fishing?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Trust me!

To see you a proper Lord would make me happy!

THE FOOL

Tonight I'll plant my weight on what I'll get! –

(He Exits.)

MEPHISTOPHELES

Who doubts now that our Fool's full of wit!

PART II ACT I SCENE V: A GLOOMY GALLERY

Faust. Mephistopheles.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Why bring me here to this dark passage?
Isn't there fun enough inside,
In the Court's colourful tide,
Opportunities for jests and sharp practice?

FAUST

Don't give me that: in the good old days
You wore us out in a thousand ways:
And now this wandering, there and here,
Is only so I can't catch your ear.
But there's something I need done:
Commander and Chamberlain egg me on.
The Emperor, I must work quickly for him,
Wants Helen and Paris to appear before him:
He wants to see the ideal form of Man
Clearly revealed to him, and Woman.
Get to work! I daren't break my word.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Such a thoughtless promise was absurd.

FAUST

Friend, you haven't considered
Where your powers have lead us:
First we made him rich, and how,
So he wants us to amuse him now.

MEPHISTOPHELES

You think it's fixed that quickly:
We're looking at a deeper track,
To the strangest realm, and wickedly,
Adding new faults to the old,

Do you think it's easy to call Helen back,
Like a pasteboard spirit edged with gold –
Witch-bitches, ghost-hostesses, freely,
Or dwarf-maidens, I'll serve you equally:
But Devil's sweethearts, though you're for them,
Still you can't, as heroines, applaud them.

FAUST

Still the same old story, every day!
With you, things are always difficult.
You're the father of all obstacles,
For every miracle you want more pay.
I know: a little muttering, and it's done:
At a blink, you'll bring her here.

MEPHISTOPHELES

With Pagan folk I don't get on:
They live in their own Hell there:
Yet, there is a way.

FAUST

Tell, without delay!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Unwillingly! There's a greater mystery, I say,
Goddesses, enthroned on high, and solitary.
No space round them, not even time: only
To speak of them embarrasses me.

They are The Mothers!

FAUST (Terrified.)

Mothers!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Are you afraid?

FAUST

The Mothers! Mothers! It sounds so strange!

MEPHISTOPHELES

As, it is. Goddesses, unknown, as you see,
To you Mortals, not named by us willingly.
You must dig in the Depths to reach them:
It's your own fault that we need them.

FAUST

Where is the path?

MEPHISTOPHELES

No path! Into the un-enterable,
Never to be entered: One path to the un-askable,
Never to be asked. Are you ready?
No locks, no bolts to manipulate,
You'll drift about in solitary space.
Can you conceive the waste and solitary?

FAUST

I think you might spare the speeches then:
They always smell of the witches' kitchen,
Of a long forgotten time, to me.
Have I not trafficked with the world?
Learned the void, the void unfurled? –
When I spoke with reason, as I descried,
Contradiction, doubly loud, replied:
Have I not fled, from hateful trickery,
Into the wild, into the solitary,
And, not to lose all, and live alone,
Surrendered to the Devil's own?

MEPHISTOPHELES

And if you'd swum through every ocean,
And seen the boundless space all round

You'd still have seen wave on wave in motion,
Though you might have been afraid to drown.
You'd have seen something. Seen, within
The green still seas, the leaping dolphin:
Seen clouds go by, Sun, Moon and star –
You'll see none in the endless void, afar,
Hear not a single footstep fall,
Find no firm place to rest at all.

FAUST

You speak as chief of all Mystagogues, who
Deceive their neophytes, the loyal and true:
Only reversed. You send me to the Void,
So I'll increase the power and skill employed:
To use me, like a cat, that's your desire:
Just to claw your chestnuts from the fire.
The same as ever! I'll find what I'll discover:
In your Nothingness, I hope, the All I will recover.

MEPHISTOPHELES

I'll praise you, before you separate from me,
That you know the Devil, I can truly see:
Here take this key.

FAUST

That tiny thing!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Grasp it, it has a worth you're undervaluing.

FAUST

It's growing in my hand, it shines and glows!

MEPHISTOPHELES

What one possesses in it, would you now know?

The key will sniff the place out, from all others.

Follow it down: it leads you to the Mothers.

FAUST

The Mothers! That always strikes me like a blow!

What is that word that, once heard, scares me so?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Are you so limited one new word disturbs you?

Will you only hear what you're accustomed to?

Don't be troubled, whatever strange sound rings,

You've already long been used to marvellous things.

FAUST

Yes, there's no good for me in lethargy.

A shudder's the truest sign of humanity:

Though the world is such we may not feel it,

Once seized by it, we feel Immensity deeply.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Then, descend! I might as easily say rise!

It's all the same. Escape from what exists,

Into the boundless realm where all Form lies!

Delight in what's no longer on the list:

Where turmoil rolls along all cloudily:

Then, far from your body, swing the key!

FAUST (Inspired.)

Good! I feel new strength, firmly grasped,

My heart expands, on now to the great task.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Sight of a glowing tripod will tell you, finally,

You're in the last deep, deepest there might be.

By its light you'll see the Mothers,

Some sit about, as they wish, the others,

Stand and move. Formation, Transformation,

Eternal minds in eternal recreation.

Images of all creatures float, portrayed:

They'll not see you: they only see a shade.

Be of good heart, the danger there is great,

Go to the tripod: don't hesitate,

And touch it with the key!

Faust assumes a commanding attitude with the key.

MEPHISTOPHELES (Watching him.)

That's right!

It will close itself, and follow as a servant might:

Exalted by your good luck, you'll calmly rise,

And be back with it, before you've blinked your eyes.

And, once you've brought it here all right,

Call the Hero and Heroine from the night,

The first man who has ever achieved it:

It's done, and you're the one who did it.

By magic process then you'll surely find,

The incense' vapour will become divine.

FAUST

And now: what?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Strain with all your being: downward.

Stamp to descend, stamp again to go upward.

Faust stamps and sinks out of sight.

If he might only gain some good from that key!

I'm curious as to whether he'll return to me.

PART II ACT I SCENE VI: BRILLIANTLY LIT HALLS

The Emperor and Princes. The Court in Action.

THE CHAMBERLAIN (To Mephistopheles.)

You still owe us that scene with the Spirits:

The Emperor's impatient. Get on with it!

THE STEWARD

That's what His Grace just now was saying:

You! Don't offend His Majesty by delaying.

MEPHISTOPHELES

That's why my companion has just gone:

He knows how to put the whole thing on,

And has to labour away in silence: still,

All the most special diligence he applies:

He who'd own that treasure, the Beautiful,

Needs highest arts, the magic of the wise.

THE STEWARD

The arts you need are neither here nor there:

The Emperor orders it to be prepared.

A BLONDE LADY (Approaching Mephistopheles.)

Sir, a word! You see a clear complexion,

Yet it's not so in summertime's dejection!

A hundred red-brown freckles all sprout there,

And cover my white skin: I'm in despair.

A cure!

MEPHISTOPHELES

A pity! Such a shining beauty,

Spotted like a panther-cub, in May!

Take frogspawn, toads' tongues, in cohabitation,

Skilfully, under a full moon, make a distillation,

When it wanes, apply it undiluted,

When spring comes, the spots have been uprooted.

A DARK-HAIRED LADY

The crowd are pressing round
To squeeze you dry.

I ask a cure! For a frozen foot
That hinders me in dancing, walking by,
And I curtsy awkwardly to boot.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Permit a little kick from my foot.

DARK-HAIRED LADY

Well, between lovers that's occurred before.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Child! My kick means something more.
Like cures like, when one's suffering:
Foot heals foot, and so with every member.
Come! Pay attention! No retaliation there.

DARK-HAIRED LADY (Crying out.)

Ouch! Ouch! That hurt! I call that kicking
Like a horse's hoof.

MEPHISTOPHELES

With that the cure I bring.
You can indulge in any amount of dancing,
Touch feet under the table with your darling.

A LADY (Pushing forward.)

Let me through! My suffering is so great,
He used to hold me in his heart's embrace:
Yesterday his joy was in my glances,
He turns his back on me: with her romances.

MEPHISTOPHELES

That's serious, but listen to me now.
You must gently press your advances,

Take this charcoal: mark him anyhow,
On his cloak or on his sleeve alight,
He'll feel sweet Remorse's blow.

Swallow the charcoal straight away,
No wine or water on your lips all day:
He'll be sighing at your door tonight.

THE LADY

It's not poisonous?

MEPHISTOPHELES (Offended.)

Respect now, where it's due!

You'd have to travel far to find such charcoal:
It comes from the dying pyre at a funeral,
On which I, once more, diligently blew.

A PAGE

I'm in love: they say I'm not old enough to.

MEPHISTOPHELES (Aside.)

I'm not sure now, whom I should listen to.

(To the Page.)

Don't set your heart on the younger ones.

The older will value what they've won.

Others crowd round.

More, already! What a demanding crew!

I'll help myself, and out now with the truth:

The worst expedient! The pain is great, you see. —

O Mothers, Mothers! Just let Faust go free!

(Gazing round him.)

The lights burn dim, already, in the hall,

The Court's moving off, and they're all

Arranged in their proper rank, I see,

Through the far aisles and galleries.

Now they assemble in the largest place,
The vast Hall of the Knights, there's barely space,
Who bought the mass of bright tapestry,
Filled corners, niches like an armoury.
Here I doubt there's need of magic spells:
The ghosts will find this place for themselves.

**PART II ACT I SCENE VII: THE HALL OF THE KNIGHTS, DIMLY
LIT**

The Emperor and Court.

THE HERALD

My ancient duty, to announce the play,
Is thwarted by the Spirits' secret action:
Please forgive: there's no sensible way
To explain such confused transformation.
The chairs are here: the stools and all:
The emperor's high up, by the wall:
He can see the battles on the tapestry
From mighty ages: watching comfortably.
Here they all sit now, Prince, Court around,
Benches packed together, as background:
In this hour of spirits, too, the lovers
Have lovingly found room beside their lovers.
And now that all have found their proper places,
We're ready: let the spirits show their faces!
(Trumpets).

THE ASTROLOGER

Begin the drama then without delay,
The Emperor commands: take walls away!

No further hindrance, here magic is at hand:
The Tapestry's shrivelled as if by burning brand.
The walls divide, and sweep apart, as one,
An empty stage it seems has been created,
A mysterious light falls on our faces,
And I climb up to the proscenium.

MEPHISTOPHELES (Rising to view in the prompter's box.)

From here I hope for general acclamation,
Prompting is the devil's true oration.

(To the Astrologer.)

You know the measures that all the stars obey,
You'll understand my whispers in a masterly way.

THE ASTROLOGER

By miraculous power appears to view,
A massive temple-front: it's ancient too.
Like Atlas, who once held up the sky,
The many rows of columns stand on high.
They might well bear the stony weight,
Since two could raise a building straight.

THE ARCHITECT

That's the antique! It doesn't earn my praise,
Clumsy, overstretched we call it, nowadays.
Men think that crude is noble: bulk is greatness.
I love slender shafts, uplifting, boundless:
A pointed arch sends the spirit to the sky:
Architecture such as that will edify.

THE ASTROLOGER

Receive with reverence
These hours the stars allow:
Let words of magic bind pure Reason now:

Let marvellously daring Fantasy,
In return, sweep onward, wide and free.
Your eyes see what you daringly conceived:
It's impossible, so more worthy to be believed.
Faust rises into view on the other side of the proscenium.
In priestly vestments, crowned, a wondrous man,
Fulfilling what he confidently began.
A tripod rises with him from deep abyss,
I smell the odour of incense in the dish.
He prepares to bless this sacred labour:
From this moment on it will find favour.

FAUST (Sublimely.)

In your name, Mothers, you enthroned
In boundlessness, set eternally alone,
And yet together. All the Forms of Life
Float round your heads, active, not alive.
Whatever was, in all its glow and gleam,
Moves there still, since it must always be.
And you assign it, with omnipotent might,
To day's pavilion or the vault of night.
Life holds some fast on its sweet track,
Others the bold magician must bring back:
Filled with faith, and richly generous,
He shows, what each desires, the Marvellous.

THE ASTROLOGER

The glowing key has scarcely touched the dish,
At once the room is filled with darkened mist:
It swirls about, as puffs of cloud will do,
Grows, condenses, shrinks, and splits in two.
And now behold a spirit-masterpiece!

As it moves about, there's music without cease.
In heavenly tones, pours out a who-knows-how,
And while it moves, all's turned to melody now.
The pillared shafts, even the tri-glyph, ringing
I think that the whole temple's singing.
The dark sinks down: from the light mist,
A handsome youth steps out in time to it.
I needn't name him, so my task is finished,
Who doesn't know the name of charming Paris!

A LADY

O! What a shining healthy powerful youth!

A SECOND

Like a peach, so fresh and full of juice!

A THIRD

The finely delineated, sweetly swelling lip!

A FOURTH

From such a cup you'd surely like to sip?

A FIFTH

He's quite pretty, but a little unrefined.

A SIXTH

He could be a bit more graceful, to my mind.

A KNIGHT

I sense the shepherd here, I think,

No trace of Courtier or Prince.

ANOTHER

Yes! Half naked the youth's quite handsome

We'd need to see him first with armour on!

A LADY

He sits down so gently and pleasantly.

A KNIGHT

You'd like to sit on his lap, comfortably?

ANOTHER

He lifts his arm so lightly above his head.

A CHAMBERLAIN

The lout! That's not acceptable: how ill-bred!

A LADY

You lords find fault with everything.

THE CHAMBERLAIN

In the Emperor's presence, all that stretching!

THE LADY

He's posed there! He thinks he's quite alone.

THE CHAMBERLAIN

Even a play should be polite in tone.

THE LADY

Now sleep has overcome the charming boy.

THE CHAMBERLAIN

And now he'll snore: that's natural, what joy!

A YOUNG LADY

What refreshes my heart so deeply, that fragrance

Mixed with fumes from the burning incense?

AN OLDER LADY

Truly! It's breath penetrates one's nature,

It comes from him!

AN ELDERLY LADY

It's the sap of nurture,

It's generated in youth, like ambrosia,

And spreads around in the atmosphere.

(Helen emerges).

MEPHISTOPHELES

So that's her! I'd not lose sleep for that. She

Is quite pretty, true, but doesn't do much for me.

THE ASTROLOGER

There's nothing more now for me to do,

As men of honour confess, I confess it too.

Beauty comes: if only I'd a tongue of fire! –

Beauty so many songs has forever inspired –

Whom she appears to, of self he's dispossessed,

Whom she belonged to, was too greatly blessed.

FAUST

Is this the fount of beauty? Have I still, eyes?

What pours here, through my mind, so richly?

My dreadful journey yields a blessed prize.

How void the world was, undeveloped for me!

What is it now since my priesthood?

Desirable, lasting, solid underfoot!

The power of my life's breath should

Fail, if I'm ever again estranged from you! –

The perfect form that drew me before,

Delighting me, in the magic mirror,

Was only an airy phantom of such beauty! – You

Are the true embodiment of my passion:

Towards you is my powers' whole direction

To you, love, feeling, faith, madness are owed.

MEPHISTOPHELES (From the prompter's box.)

Calm yourself, now, and don't fail in your role!

AN OLDER LADY

Tall, well formed, only the head is small.

A YOUNGER LADY

Just look! Could clumsier feet exist at all?

A DIPLOMAT

I've seen princesses of this kind: though
I think she's beautiful, from head to toe.

A COURTIER

Soft and sly, she goes towards the sleeper.

A LADY

How ugly, near that form so young and pure.

A POET

From her Beauty shines towards him.

A LADY

A picture! Luna and Endymion!

THE POET

Quite so! The goddess seems to descend,
Leans above him to drink his breath, ah then:
Enviably! – A Kiss! – The cup's full to excess.

A DUENNA

In front of everyone! What utter madness!

FAUST

A dreadful favour to grant a boy! –

MEPHISTOPHELES

Quiet now! Be still!

And let the spectre do what it will.

A COURTIER

She slips away, lightly: he awakes.

A LADY

Just as I thought! That glance she takes!

A COURTIER

He stares! It's wonderful what's happening.

A LADY

But not so wonderful what she sees in him.

A COURTIER

She turns towards him now with dignity.

A LADY

I see she'll soon take him through his lesson:

At such times men behave quite stupidly,

Perhaps he even thinks that's he the first one.

A KNIGHT

Let me be worthy! Majestically fine! –

A LADY

The trollop! I'd call that table wine!

A PAGE

I'd like to swap his place for mine!

A COURTIER

Who wouldn't be tangled in such a net?

A LADY

That treasure's been handled often, you forget,

And the gilding's mostly rubbed away.

ANOTHER

Worthless since it was ten years old, I'd say.

A KNIGHT

Sometimes one takes the best that one can get:

I'd be content with the loveliness that's left.

A LEARNED MAN

I see clearly but I'll confess, quite freely,

It's doubtful if that's the true one I see.

The Present's tempted to exaggerate,

I hold to what the ancient texts relate.

There I read she gave particular joy

To all the grey-bearded men of Troy:

And that fits perfectly here too, you see:

I'm not young: still she gives joy to me.

THE ASTROLOGER

No longer a boy! A daring hero, he:
Grasped she defends herself, but barely.
He lifts her high in his strong arms, too,
Will he carry her off?

FAUST

Audacious fool!
You dare? Do you hear? Stop! Enough, I say!

MEPHISTOPHELES

You created the mime these phantoms play!

THE ASTROLOGER

A word! After what we've been given,
I'll call this piece: The Rape of Helen.

FAUST

What rape! Am I nothing in this place!
Is this key no longer in my hand!
It led me through terror, waste and wave,
Through solitude, to where, set firm, I stand.
Here's a foothold! Here's reality,
Where spirit dare with spirits disagree,
And prepare itself for its great, dual mastery.
She was so far: how could she closer shine!
I'll rescue her, and she'll be doubly mine.
The risk! The Mothers! They must grant her!
Who knows her once, can never live without her.

THE ASTROLOGER

What are you doing, Faust!
Faust! –With force
He seizes her, the form dims in its course.
He turns the key against the youth, and then,

Touches him! – Ah! – Gone, in a moment! Gone!

An explosion. Faust falls to the ground. The spirits vanish in mist.

MEPHISTOPHELES

(Taking Faust on his shoulders.)

You've done it now! Carrying fools, my friend,

Brings harm to the Devil himself, in the end.

Darkness. Tumult.

**PART II ACT II SCENE I: A HIGH-ARCHED, NARROW, GOTHIC
CHAMBER**

Formerly Faust's, Unchanged

MEPHISTOPHELES (Entering from behind a curtain. As he holds it up and looks behind him, Faust is seen lying stretched out on an antiquated bed.)

Lie there, unlucky man! One tempted by

The bonds of a love not readily undone!

The man whom Helena shall paralyse

Won't find it easy to regain his reason.

(Looking around him.)

I look upwards, here, around me,

All's unaltered, and undamaged:

Stained glass, there, shows darkly,

Spiders have added to their webs:

The ink is dry: the paper's yellow,

But everything's still in its place:

Even the quill-pen's here, on show,

With which Faust and the Devil embraced.

Yes! Deeper in the nib there's still

A drop of blood, I tempted him to spill.

It's a unique piece, in my book,

So I'll wish the great collectors luck.
The old fur-robe, on the hook, too,
Reminds me of a joke or two,
That time when I taught the student,
What, perhaps, in youth, he's glad he learnt.
Truly the same desire is on me, for
You, smoke-singed gown: you and I,
To flaunt ourselves once more as a professor,
And speak as one who's always in the right.
How to achieve that all the learned know:
It's something the Devil lost long ago.

(He shakes the fur as he takes it down, and moths, crickets and beetles fly out.)

CHORUS OF INSECTS

Greetings! We're greeting
Our Patron of old,
We're floating and buzzing,
To us you're well known.
Singly, in silence,
You sowed us like plants.
Father, in thousands
We've come to the dance.
The jester is snugly
Contained in the breast,
The lice in the fur they
Are sooner expressed.

MEPHISTOPHELES

What a nice surprise, this young brood of mine!
One merely sows, and harvests in due time.
I'll shake this ancient fleece about,

Here and there, one flutters out. –
Away! Around! In a hundred leavings,
Hurry and hide yourself, you darlings.
There, where the ancient boxes lie,
Here, in the smoky parchment try,
In that broken dusty old pottery,
Or the skull, its eye-sockets empty.
All this jumbled mildewed existence,
Always gives one whims and fancies.
Again let's dress up as a lecturer!
Today I'll be the Principal, once more.
But it's no use naming myself, you see:
Where are the people, to welcome me?
FAMULUS (A College Servant, tottering here, down the long gallery.)
What a noise! What a quake!
The stairs sway, the walls shake:
Through the windows' trembling colours
I see the lightning gleam above us.
The floor leaps, and, on high,
Plaster, rubble from the sky.
And the door, once tightly locked,
By wondrous force is thrown back. –
There! How fearful! A giant
Look, in Faust's old garment!
At his gazing, and his pleas,
I want to sink to my knees.
Shall I go? Shall I remain?
Oh, what will happen to me, then!
MEPHISTOPHELES
Here, my friend! – You're called Nicodemus.

FAMULUS

Honoured Sir! That's my name – Oremus.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Enough of that!

FAMULUS

How pleased I am you knew me!

MEPHISTOPHELES

I know you well: a student still, I see,

Mossy Sir! After all, a learned man

Studies hard, and does the best he can.

So one builds a respectable house of cards,

That greater minds can't finish afterwards.

But he's a witty fellow, is your master,

Who doesn't know the noble Doctor Wagner?

He's the first in all the world of learning!

He's unique: wisdom, each day increasing,

And all of it he still holds together,

Crowds, around him, panting, gather

Listeners, eaves'-droppers, welcome.

Alone, he shines there at the rostrum.

He holds a key, just like Saint Peter,

That unlocks the lower, and the higher.

He glows and sparkles above the rest,

No name and fame has wider standing:

Even that of Faust has dimmed, at best:

He's the one who's always inventing.

FAMULUS

Forgive me, honoured Sir, if I dare

To speak, and contradict you, there:

There's no question of that, I must declare:

Since modesty's his role, as all discern.
Discovering nothing of the circumstances,
Baffled by the great man's disappearance:
He seeks all health and comfort in his return.
The room waits for its old master
While Doctor Faustus is away,
Untouched, still, as in his day.
And I scarcely dare to enter.
What can the stars be doing? –
The walls themselves are frightening me:
The doorframes quiver, bolts work free,
Or you yourself couldn't have got in.

MEPHISTOPHELES

And your great man where is he?
Lead me there: or bring him here to me!

FAMULUS

Oh! His warnings are quite clear,
I'm not allowed to interfere.
For months I've left him in utter peace,
Till his great work is complete.
He, the most delicate of scholars,
His face looks like a charcoal burner's,
Blackened now from nose to ears,
Eyes crimson, blowing up the fires,
All the while, so enthusiastic:
Clinking of tongs, that's his music.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Why would he deny an entrance to me?
I'm one who'd speed his luck, you see.
The Famulus exits: Mephistopheles sits down, gravely.

I've hardly taken my seat here,
And I see a guest behind my chair.
But he's one of the new school's persuasion:
He'll be arrogant, I think, on this occasion.
BACCALAUREUS (Storming along the corridor.)
I find the gates and doors are open!
Now there's room at last for hope then,
That it won't be merely as before,
A live man, acting as a corpse,
Wasting away, and rotting,
Till he merely dies of living.
These walls and these partitions,
Bow and sink towards perdition,
And if we don't look about us,
Their decline and fall will rout us.
I'm audacious, no one more so,
But no further in do I go.
What will I find here today?
It's years since I've been this way,
Where timid and innocent
As a freshman I was sent!
Where I trusted in my elders,
Edified by all their blather.
From the dry old books, they knew
They lied to me: what they knew,
Not believing in it truly,
Stealing life itself, from me.
What? – There, in his cell,
Sits a darkly bright one still!
With astonishment now, nearer,

See him sitting in his dark fur,
Truly, as I left him sitting
Still in all his coarse wrapping!
Then he seemed a fount of wisdom,
Since I didn't understand him.
He won't find me so today,
Fresh and new, I'm on my way!
Sir, if in Lethe's melancholy stream
That bald nodding head's not swum,
See your grateful scholar come,
Outgrown, his academic dream.
I find you now, as I saw you:
I was another though: that's true.

MEPHISTOPHELES

I'm glad the ringing brought you.
I rated you once before as high:
The caterpillar, the chrysalis too,
Showed the bright future butterfly.
Your curly hair and pointed collar,
Made you a childishly pleasing scholar.
You never wore pigtails I believe? –
And today you're cropped like a Swede.
I see you're bold and resolute:
But don't go home too absolute!

BACCALAUREUS

My old master! We're in our old places:
But don't think to renew time's journey,
And spare me words with dual-faces:
I treat them now quite differently.
You teased the true, and honest youth.

It wasn't difficult for you to do
It's what no one dares to do today.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Pure truth on the young is thrown away,
The little beaks don't like it, any way,
But afterwards when years have passed,
And they've learnt it for themselves at last,
And think it came from them, not school:
Then we hear: 'The Master was a fool.'

BACCALAUREUS

A rascal, maybe! – What teacher ever shows us
The Truth directly, underneath our noses?
They know the way to make it seem more, or less,
Now serious, now playful, as suits the children best.

MEPHISTOPHELES

There's a moment given us for learning, truly:
But you're ready now to teach, yourself, I see.
For many moons, united with their suns,
You the riches of experience have won.

BACCALAUREUS

Experience! Mist and Foam!
And not the Spirit's equal.
Confess! What one has known,
Is not worth knowing at all.

MEPHISTOPHELES (After a pause.)

I've thought so for ages. I was a Fool,
But I think that shallow now I'm sensible.

BACCALAUREUS

That pleases me! I hear pure Reason's sound:
The first old man of sense I've ever found.

MEPHISTOPHELES

I sought for treasure, buried gold,
And brought to light frightful coals.

BACCALAUREUS

Confess now, your skull, bald and old,
Is worth no more than that empty poll.

MEPHISTOPHELES (Amiably.)

Do you know, my friend, how rude you seem to me?

BACCALAUREUS

In German, one's lying if one speaks politely.

MEPHISTOPHELES

(Wheeling his chair nearer to the proscenium and the audience.)

Up here I'm dazed by light and air:

Shall I take shelter with you down there?

BACCALAUREUS

I find it arrogant that in times like these,
A man wants to be what he no longer is.
Man's life is in his arteries, and when
Are they so vibrant as in younger men?
There the fresh blood full of strength
Creates new life from its own life again.
There all works, and things get done,
The waverers fall, the capable get on.
While we've conquered half the world,
What have you done? Nodded, curled
In the sun, dreamed, weighed, plan on plan.
For sure, age is a chilling fever:
The frost of whims and need ahead.
When your thirtieth year is over,
A man's as good as dead.

It would be best to seek an early grave.

MEPHISTOPHELES

That leaves the Devil nothing more to say.

BACCALAUREUS

Unless I will it, no Devil can exist.

MEPHISTOPHELES (Aside.)

The Devil will still trip you, in a bit.

BACCALAUREUS

This is youth's noblest profession!

The world was nothing before my creation:

I drew the Sun out of the sea:

The Moon began her changeful course with me:

The daylight decked my path to greet me,

The Earth flowered, grew green, to meet me.

At my command, in primal night,

The stars in splendour swam to sight.

Who, but I, loosed from its prison

Cramped thought's philistinism?

I, quite free, as my spirit cites,

Happily following my inner light,

And speeding on, in delight,

Darkness behind: and all before me, bright.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Go forth in splendour, you primal man! –

How could insight harm you, ever:

Who can think of stupid things or clever,

That past ages didn't, long ago, understand.

Yet there's no danger from him, you see,

He'll think about it differently in time:

Even if the grape-juice acts absurdly,

In the end it changes into wine.
To the younger members of the audience, who do not applaud.
My words have left you cold, I gather,
May it be so for you, sweet children:
But think: the Devil's a lot older,
So you need to be old to understand him!

PART II ACT II SCENE II: A LABORATORY

In the fashion of the Middle Ages: lots of heavy apparatus for strange purposes.

WAGNER (At the furnace.)
The fearful bell is sounding,
The soot-black walls shudder.
My deepest expectation
Will be unsure no longer.
Soon the dark itself will lighten:
Soon in the innermost phial,
It will glow like living fire,
Yes, like the noblest ruby's glow,
Lightning flashing in the shadow.
A clearest white light shines now!
Ah, not to lose it once more! –
Oh, God! Who's rattling at the door?
MEPHISTOPHELES (Entering.)
Greetings! And kindly meant now.
WAGNER (Anxiously.)
Welcome, to the planet of the hour!
(Whispering.)
But stifle your breath, and words' power,

A noble work is likewise being weighed.

MEPHISTOPHELES (Whispering.)

What might it be?

WAGNER (Whispering.)

A Man is being made.

MEPHISTOPHELES

A Man? And what loving couple

Have you got hidden, up the chimney?

WAGNER

God Forbid! How unfashionable!

We're free of all that idle foolery.

The tender moment from which life emerged,

The charming power with which its inner urge,

Took and gave, and clearly stamped its seal,

First in a near, and then a further field,

We now divest of all that dignity:

Though the creatures still enjoy it, we,

As Men, with all our greater gifts, begin,

To have, as we should, a nobler origin.

(He turns towards the furnace.)

It brightens! See! – Now there's a real chance,

That, if from the hundred-fold substance,

By mixing – since mixing makes it happen –

The stuff of human life's compounded,

And distilled in a flask, well-founded,

And in proper combination, grounded,

Then the silent work is done.

(He turns again to the furnace.)

It will be! The mass is clearer!

The proof comes nearer, nearer:

What man praises in deepest Nature,
Through Reason we dare to probe it,
And what she organises, here,
We're now able to crystallise it.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Who lives a while, gains much experience,
And nothing new can happen on his journey.
In years of travelling, and in my presence,
I've seen, already, crystallised humanity.

WAGNER (Up till now attending to the phial.)

It rises: flashes, there's expansion
In a moment more it will be done.
Great aims seem foolish at the outset:
But we'll laugh at Chance itself, yet,
And brains, with thoughts to celebrate,
In the future, a Thinker will create.
(He inspects the phial, rapturously.)

The glass rings with sweet power,
It darkens, clears: it must have being!
In a delicate form I see appear
A well-behaved little Man behaving.

What can the world ask more, what can we?
Now that this mystery's visible to each.

Give ear to what these sounds may be,
They make a voice: they're forming speech.

HOMUNCULUS (From the phial, to Wagner.)

Now, father! That was no joke. How are you?

Come: press me tenderly to your heart, too!

But not too hard, the glass may be too thin.

It's in the very nature of the thing:

For the natural the world has barely space:
What's artificial commands a narrow place.
(To Mephistopheles.)

But you, Rascal, my dear Cousin, are you
Here at the right moment? I thank you, too.
Good fortune's led you here to me:
Since I exist, I must be doing, you see.
I'd like to begin my work today:
You're skilful at shortening the way.

WAGNER

But first, a word! Till now I've had no direction,
When old or young teased me with a question.
For example: no one's found out, ever,
What makes body and soul fit together:
Stick tight, as if there'll be no separation,
Yet always cause each other irritation.
So then, -

MEPHISTOPHELES

Stop! I'd rather he told me,
Why married people get by so wretchedly?
You'll never discover that, my friend.
There's work to do the little Man can tend.

HOMUNCULUS

What work's to do?

MEPHISTOPHELES

(Pointing to a side door.)

Employ your gifts on this!

WAGNER (Still gazing at the phial.)

Truly, you're the loveliest boy there is!

The side-door opens: Faust is seen stretched out on a couch.

HOMUNCULUS (Astonished.)

Interesting!

The phial slips out of Wagner's hands, hovers over Faust, and shines on him.

Lovely surroundings! – Clear water

In thick forest! Women there: undressing.

The loveliest of all! – It's getting clearer.

One's left, different from the rest, gleaming:

Of highest race, for sure, a heavenly name.

She places her foot in the transparent glow,

Her noble body's sweetly living flame

Cools itself in the yielding crystal flow. –

But what's that rush of beating wings for:

That thrashing, splashing, in the mirror?

The lovely girls, intimidated, flee:

Their queen, alone, looks on, composedly,

To see, with a proud feminine pleasure,

The Swan-Prince press against her knee, there,

Forward yet tame. Familiar, he seems. –

But suddenly a vapour heaves,

And covers, with the veil it weaves,

The loveliest of scenes.

MEPHISTOPHELES

All the things that you could murmur!

So little: and such a great dreamer.

I see nothing –

HOMUNCULUS

So I believe. You're Northern,

In the age of mist you're born then,

In a jumble of priest-craft and chivalry,

So how could your sight be free!

You're at home with darkness.

(He gazes around.)

Brown repulsive, mildewed walls,

Low, pointed arches, full of scrolls! –

One wakes, and gives another pain,

On the spot, dead then, he'll remain.

Wooded founts, swans, naked beauty,

That was his far-sighted dream:

How could this place do duty!

I can scarcely endure the scene.

Carry him off!

MEPHISTOPHELES

I'd be happy: a last chance.

HOMUNCULUS

Order the soldier to the fight,

Lead the maiden to the dance,

Then everything's done right.

Even now, thinks, quick as light,

It's Classical Walpurgis Night:

That's the best, if he were sent

To his own true element!

MEPHISTOPHELES

I've never heard that event named, here.

HOMUNCULUS

How could it come to your ear?

Only Romantic ghosts, for you:

A true ghost must be Classic too.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Which path do we take there? Already

Your antique colleagues quite repel me.

HOMUNCULUS

North-westward Satan, is your pleasure ground,

But this time we're South-eastward bound –

In wider space flows Peneus, the free

By bushes, groves, and damp still bays:

Its levels stretch to mountain ways,

And over it Pharsalus: old, yet contemporary.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Oh! Enough! And keep all the fight,

Of tyranny and slavery, out of sight.

It bores me: they're scarce done when

They start the whole thing over again:

And no one sees: they're being re-aligned,

By Asmodeus, who works them from behind.

They clash, it's said, for Freedom's right:

Seen rightly, slave with slave is all the fight.

HOMUNCULUS

Leave Mankind's wilfulness to me, then.

Each man defends himself, as best he can,

From childhood, till, at last, he is a man.

Just ask how we can get back there again.

Have you a method, then, let's see:

If you haven't, leave it all to me.

MEPHISTOPHELES

There's many a Brocken trick I could display,

But I find that Pagan bolts have barred the way.

The whole Greek race was never that much use!

They dazzle with the senses' freer play: it's true:

They lure the heart of man to happier sins:

While ours, one always finds, are gloomy things.

And now, what?

HOMUNCULUS

Once you weren't so witless:

When I spoke about Thessalian witches.

I can deliver what I said: just think a little.

MEPHISTOPHELES (Lustfully.)

Thessalian witches! Good! They're the people

I once enquired about long ago.

I don't think it would suit me, at all,

To live with them night after night, though,

Still, a visit, and a trial –

HOMUNCULUS

This mantle here,

Fold it around your knight there!

As before, the cloak can carry another,

One of you, along with the other.

I'll light the way.

WAGNER (Anxiously.)

And I?

HOMUNCULUS

Well, now, you

Stay home, there are important things to do.

Unfold all your ancient parchments,

Then, by rote, collect life's elements,

And place them together with due care,

Consider What, more deeply consider How.

Meanwhile round the world, a bit, I'll fare,

And find the last dot on the 'i', for now.

Then the great work will see its final stage:

Great effort will merit great reward, you'll see:
Gold, honour, fame, a long and ripe old age,
And science too – and virtue, possibly.
Farewell!

WAGNER (Sadly.)

Farewell! It gives me pain.
Already, I fear, I'll not see you again.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Now to Peneus, lively, on!
Sir Cousin's highly rated.

(To the audience.)

In the end we're dependent on
The creatures we've created.

PART II ACT II SCENE III: CLASSICAL WALPURGIS NIGHT.

The Pharsalian Fields. Darkness.

ERICHTHO (The Thessalian Witch, see Lucan's Pharsalia.)

This night's awesome feast, as so often in the past,
I enter now, I, Erichtho, the gloomy one:
Not so abominable as the wretched poets
Painted me, with excessive slander...they never
Cease their blame or praise...I see the valley whiten
With waves of tents that gleam greyer in the distance,
The after-image of that anxious, fearful night.
How often it's repeated! In eternity
Acted out, again, forever...No one gives the realm
To another: to the one whose power won it:
Whose strength rules. Since each, incapable of ruling

His inner self, would gladly rule his neighbour's will,
In the manner that his proud mind dictates to him...
But here a great instance was fought out, to the end,
Of how force may battle against a greater force,
Freedom's lovely thousand-blossomed garland be torn,
And stubborn laurel be wound round the ruler's brow.
Here, Pompey dreams of his youth and former greatness,
There, Caesar, listening, watches the balance tremble!
It settles, and the world knows whom it sinks towards.
The watch fires, glowing, send out their crimson flames:
The field exhales those images of squandered blood,
And lured by the strange wondrous splendour of the night,
A legion of Hellenic legends gather here.
They hover around all the fires uncertainly,
Or sit nearby, the fabled forms of ancient days....
The Moon, not full it is true, but of clearest light,
Rises, scattering mild radiance everywhere:
The ghostly tents vanish: the fires burn bluish now.
But, over my head, what sudden meteor's this?
It shines, illuminates the material globe.
I smell Life. It's not fitting for me to approach
Closer to the living, since I'm harmful to them:
It gives me a bad name, and is no benefit to me.
It sinks down already. I give way, thoughtfully!
She Exits. The Airy Travellers speak from above.

HOMUNCULUS

Once again float round the circle
Over flames and shuddering horror:
On the ground, and in the vale still,
It's quite ghostly, we discover.

MEPHISTOPHELES

It's the same as through my old window
In the grim and tangled north,
Really loathsome ghosts below,
I'm at home here: and there, of course.

HOMUNCULUS

See! There's a tall one striding,
With gigantic steps, before us.

MEPHISTOPHELES

As if she were afraid, now: gliding
Through the air above, she saw us.

HOMUNCULUS

Let her stride! Right away,
Set the knight down there:
He'll return to life again,
Once he breathes this mythic air.

FAUST (As he touches the ground.)

Where is she?

HOMUNCULUS

We can't say, I fear,
But you can probably enquire here.
Hurry now before it's daylight,
Go and search, from fire to fire:
Who found his way to the Mothers' side,
Won't find this harder to survive.

MEPHISTOPHELES

On my own behalf too, I'm here:
But I don't know anything better
Than each to seek, among the fires,
The adventure he desires.

Then, so that we can reunite,
Little one, shine your ringing light.

HOMUNCULUS

It shines like this, and rings.
(The glass shines and rings out powerfully.)
Now off to new and wondrous things!

FAUST (Alone.)

Where is she? – But no further answer seek...

If this is not the soil she trod,
Nor the wave that bathed her foot,
It is the air that spoke her speech.
Here! By a miracle, on Hellenic land!

I feel, the earth, too, where I stand:
A fresh power glows in me, the Sleeper,
So I am Antaeus-like in nature.
And I find the strangest things lie here,
First let me search this Labyrinth of fire.

(He moves away.)

On the Upper Peneus

MEPHISTOPHELES (Looking around.)

And as I wander through these fires,
I feel myself a total stranger: in the event,
They're mostly naked, a shirt here and there:
The Sphinx shameless, the Gryphon impudent:
And what's more, curly-haired and winged,
Before, behind, in eyes, reflected things...
Of course, at heart, indecency's my ideal,
But I find the Antique is a little too real.
One should control all with a modern mind,
Overlay it with fashions of assorted kinds....

Repulsive people! Yet still I have to meet them,

And, as a new guest too, correctly greet them...

Luck to you, fair ladies, and men, you wise grey ones!

A GRYPHON (Snarling. For the gold-guarding Gryphons see Herodotus' Histories.)

Not Grey ones! Gryphons! – No one likes the name

Of something grey. Every word rings

With what conditioned it: its origins:

Grey, grievous, grumpy, gruesome, gravely, grimly,

Similarly harmonious etymologically,

Disharmonise us.

MEPHISTOPHELES

And yet, without deviation,

You like the gryp in your proud name of Gryphon.

THE GRYPHON (Snarling continuously.)

Naturally! The relationship's tried and tested:

It was often censured, but more often praised:

One grips maidens, money, gold,

To the gripper, Fortune's never cold.

GIANT ANTS

You spoke of gold: we've collected lots of it,

In rocks and caves, secretly, we've crammed it:

The Arimaspi, discovered it all, one day,

They're laughing now: they took it far away.

THE GRYPHON

We'll soon make them confess.

THE ARIMASPI (For the Scythian race of the Arimaspi and their association with gold mining see Herodotus' Histories.)

But not on this night of public festival.

By morning we'll have spent it all.

This time at least we'll achieve success.

MEPHISTOPHELES (Sitting among the Sphinxes.)

How free, and easy, I feel here,

I understand you, one and all.

A SPHINX

We breathe out spirit-tones, clear,

That for you become substantial.

Now name yourself, so we can know your fame.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Men choose to saddle me with a host of names...

Are there Britons here? They travel about so much,

Looking for battlefields, and ruined walls,

The dullest classical places, waterfalls:

Here's a site that's worth all their fuss.

They spoke of me too: in their Mysteries:

And portrayed me there as Old Iniquity.

A SPHINX

How so?

MEPHISTOPHELES

I don't know why that should be.

A SPHINX

Perhaps you've knowledge of the stars?

What do you think of the present hour?

MEPHISTOPHELES (Gazing upwards.)

Star glides by star, the horned moon shines bright,

And I feel happy here, in this mournful site,

I warm myself on a lion skin: your right.

To have to take off, again: that would be hard:

Give us a riddle, or at least charades.

A SPHINX

To express yourself, that would be a riddle.
Try for once to solve your own inner muddle:
'Needed by the good man and the sinful,
To the first a breastplate in ascetic swordplay,
A wild friend for the other, to show the way,
And both amusing Zeus with their display.'

THE FIRST GRYPHON (Snarling.)

I don't like him!

THE SECOND GRYPHON (Snarling more fiercely.)

What's he after?

BOTH GRYPHONS

The nasty thing, he's not been heard of here!

MEPHISTOPHELES (Nastily.)

Perhaps you think a guest's nails can't claw
Every bit as sharply as those talons of yours?
Just try it, then!

A SPHINX (Gently.)

You'll only stay until,
You leave our company, yourself, as you will:
In your own land everything worked for you,
But this if I'm not wrong's too much for you.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Looked at above, you're rather appetising,
But lower down the creature's somewhat frightening.

A SPHINX

False one, you'll do bitter penance,
These claws of ours are sound and good:
You with your withered horse's hoof,
Aren't comfortable in our presence.
The Sirens start to sing, above them.

What are those birds shaking
The poplar branches by the stream?

A SPHINX

Take care! The song they're making
Conquered the best there's ever been.

THE SIRENS

Ah, why should you choose to live
Amongst amazing ugliness!

Listen, we flock to you, ah yes,
With tuneful sounds, in excess,
That Sirens ought to give.

THE SPHINXES (Mocking them.)

Make them fly down here to us!
Their falcon-claws, so hideous,
They've hidden in the leaves:
They'll fall on you, cruelly, you see
If you choose to hear them sigh.

THE SIRENS

Away with hate! Away with envy!
We gather purest ecstasies,
Scattered through the sky!
On the earth, or on the sea,
With the happiest gestures, we
Greet men who wander by.

MEPHISTOPHELES

This is news of the sweetest,
Here from lyre and chest,
One note twines round another.
But this warbling's lost on me:
It crawls into my ear, you see,

Yet my heart feels nothing, here.

THE SPHINXES

Don't talk of hearts! That's idle:

A leather bag would do as well,

To match that face you wear.

FAUST (Approaching.)

Marvellous! Gazing's enough for me,

At grand repulsiveness, and solidity:

I suspect I'll find good fortune shortly:

Where will this serious gazing take me?

(He points at the Sphinxes.)

Once Oedipus stood in front of them:

(He points at the Sirens.)

Ulysses writhed in ropes for them:

(He points to the Ants.)

They gathered a mighty treasure.

(He points to the Gryphons.)

They guarded it in fullest measure.

I feel new power flowing through me:

Mighty these forms: of mighty memory.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Once you'd have run from things like these,

But now they look good to you:

When a man seeks his beloved, he's

Ready to meet monsters too.

FAUST (To the Sphinxes.)

You female forms, tell me then,

Have any of you seen Helen?

THE SPHINXES

None of us lasted till her day,

Hercules the last did slay.
You can ask Chiron, anyway:
He gallops round in this spirit night:
When he stops for you, you might.

THE SIRENS

You will not fail at all!...
How Ulysses lingered with us,
Not hurrying scornfully by us,
He'd many times recall:
All will be shown you,
If you make your journey to
Our fields, in the green sea.

A SPHINX

Don't let yourself be deceived.
Instead of Ulysses self-bonded,
We bind with good advice. On!
When you reach noble Chiron,
You'll find it's as I promised.
Faust wanders off.

MEPHISTOPHELES (In a temper.)

What croaks by me on beating wing,
So quick that one can't see a thing.
And one behind the other, flying?
Even a hunter would weary of these.

A SPHINX

That storm, like the winds of winter, here,
Hercules' arrows could scarce get near:
They are the swift Stymphalides,
And their croaked greetings are well-meant,
The vulture-beaked, and goose-webbed.

They'd gladly appear in our place,
As a closely-related race.

MEPHISTOPHELES (As if intimidated.)

Something else is having a hissing fit.

SPHINX

Don't be worried about those either!

They're the heads of the Lernaean Hydra,
Lopped from the trunk, but think they're it.

But, what's the matter, now then?

Why all the restless movements?

Where are you going? He's gone!...

I see that Chorus over there, that one,
Has turned your head. You'll get nowhere,
Go on: greet every sweet face there!

They're Lamiae, the lustful girls,
With smiling lips, impudent curls,
The race of Satyrs all delight in:

With them a cloven foot's the very thing.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Will you stay here? So I can find you again.

SPHINX

Yes! Mix with the flighty rabble.

In Egypt, we were accustomed, you know,
To rule for a thousand years or so.

And if you respect our location,
We'll regulate the days of Moon and Sun.

We'll sit in front of the Pyramids,
To pass judgement on the nations:

With changeless faces, there, amid
War and peace, and inundations.

On the Lower Peneus. The river-god, surrounded by nymphs and tributary streams.

PENEUS

Stir, you reed-beds, whispering, flowing!

Sigh softly, slender rushes, bowing,

Lightly, willow-bushes, rustling,

Lisp, you poplar-branches trembling,

Through the broken dream!.....

Dreadful premonitions wake me,

Secret quivering, now, shakes me,

In my peaceful wandering stream.

FAUST (Approaching the river.)

If I heard true, as I believe:

From behind the tangled leaves

Of these shrubs and branches,

Came sounds of human voices.

Then the fount seemed to chatter,

And the breeze filled with laughter.

THE NYMPHS (To Faust.)

Just to lie here, now,

For you would be best,

Reviving your wearied

Body with coolness,

Enjoy here forever

Your fugitive rest:

Murmuring, trickling,

We'll whisper, and bless.

FAUST

I'm awake! O let them linger there

Those images without compare,

As they reached my sight.
I'm moved so marvellously!
Is it dream? Or is it memory?
Once before, I knew this delight.
The waters creep through the freshness,
The softly swaying bushes' thickness,
Without rushing, barely trickling:
A hundred founts from all sides press,
And gather to the purest brightness,
Fill the pool's shallow ring.
Glowing limbs of young girls are
Reflected by the liquid mirror,
And added to the eye's delight!
Companionably, bathing joyfully,
Swimming boldly, wading shyly,
Crying out, at last, in watery fight.
This sight's enough to renew
My eyes with gazing at the view,
But ever wider vision strains.
My glance cuts sharply through the cover,
Rich foliage, green wealth, around her,
Serves to hide the noble queen.
Marvellous! The swans approaching:
From the bays, come softly swimming,
Majestically pure their movement.
Floating calm, in sweet society,
But how proudly, self-delightedly,
Head and neck are lifted, bent.....
One shines out above all others,
Boasting boldly of his favours,

Sailing swiftly in their race:
His ruffled plumage swelling,
Wave-like, on the wave he's stirring,
He hastens to the sacred place...
The others swimming here and there,
With their smooth shining feathers,
Soon meet in fine contention,
Drive away the frightened maidens,
Not thinking of their service, then
But only of their own protection.

THE NYMPHS

Sisters, bend and set you ears
To the river-banks' green turf:
If I hear rightly, coming near,
That's the sound of hooves on earth.
If I only knew who that message might
Be bringing, swiftly, to the Night!

FAUST

To me, the ground seems ringing, too
Echoing to some swift stallion's hoof.
There, gaze, my eyes!
Good luck, is nigh,
Will it come to me as well?
O, wonder without parallel!
A rider trots towards us, now,
Gifted, shines with spirit and power
Grafted to a snow-white horse...
I know him too, I can't be wrong,
It's Philyra's famous son! –
Halt, Chiron! Halt! Hear my discourse...

CHIRON (The Centaur.)

What then? What is it?

FAUST

Delay a moment!

CHIRON

I never rest.

FAUST

Well, take me with you, then!

CHIRON

Mount! And I can question you, at leisure:

Where are you going? You're by the river,

I'll carry you through the flood, with pleasure.

FAUST (Mounting his back.)

Wherever you wish. My thanks forever...

You, the great man, the noble teacher,

Famed for educating the race of heroes,

That splendid company of the Argonauts,

And all who edified the Poets' thoughts.

CHIRON

All that in its proper place!

As Mentor, even Pallas wasn't rated:

In the end they do things their own way,

As if they'd none of them been educated.

FAUST

The doctor who can name the plants,

And roots, profoundly, understands:

Who heals the sick, and soothes the wound,

Here, strong in mind and body, have I found!

CHIRON

When a hero was injured near me.

I gave the right assistance and advice:
But, at last, bequeathed my art, you see,
To priests, and herb-gathering old wives.

FAUST

You've a truly great man's ways:
He won't hear a word of praise.
He'll modestly defer to us
And act as if all were equals.

CHIRON

You seem artful at those pretences,
Which flatter common folk and princes.

FAUST

But surely you'd confess today:
You saw the greatest, of your age,
Among the noblest deeds, you trod,
And lived life as a demi-god.
Among those great heroic forms,
Who was the finest of them all?

CHIRON

Among the Argonauts, in my day,
Each was worthy, in his own way.
And with the powers he inhaled,
Knew enough when others failed.
Castor and Pollux always conquered,
When youth and beauty were honoured.
In determination, and swift help to others,
First was Calais, and Zetes his brother,
Thoughtful, clever, strong, well-advised,
Jason conquered, woman-folk's delight.
Then Orpheus: gentle, always brooding,

Sounding the lyre, quite over-powering.
Sharp-eyed Lynceus, by night and day,
Steering the sacred ship past reef and bay...
Let such dangers always be faced as brothers:
If one achieves he's praised by all the others.

FAUST

Of Hercules, you say nothing?

CHIRON

Oh! Don't rouse my yearning....

Never noting how Phoebus

Ares, or Hermes, were defined,

With my own eyes I saw before us

What all men praise as divine.

He was born a king, no other,

A splendid youth to gaze upon:

Yielding to his elder brother,

And the loveliest of women.

Gaea's never known a second,

Nor Hebe led such on to heaven's zone:

In vain for him they sing the songs,

In vain for him they carve the stone.

FAUST

The sculptors never caught his form,

However many images they made.

You've spoken of the loveliest man,

Now speak about the loveliest maid!

CHIRON

What!...I won't talk of woman's beauty,

It's so often a frozen mask to me:

I can only praise that nature, truly,

Flowing freely, and cheerfully.

Beauty's delighted with itself:

Grace makes it irresistible,

Like Helen, whom I carried.

FAUST

You carried her?

CHIRON

Yes on this very back.

FAUST

Was I not sufficiently aroused?

Such a seat, now, will bring me luck!

CHIRON

She gripped me by the mane, so,

As you are doing.

FAUST

I'm vanquished, oh,

Completely! Tell me, why here?

She is my one and only desire!

Carried her from where, to where?

CHIRON

That's easy to tell, since you enquire.

At that time, the Dioscuri, Castor and Pollux,

Freed their sister, Helen, from a nest of robbers.

The robbers then, not used to being conquered,

Regained their courage, and chased them onward.

The sister and brothers' hasty course was halted

By all the swamps that lie below Eleusis:

The brothers waded: I swam over, swiftly:

Then she sprang off, and, stroking gently

My wet mane, caressed me, thanked me,

Confident, sweetly clever were her ways.

She was so charming! Youth, delighting Age!

FAUST

Only ten years old!...

CHIRON

The philologists deceive you,

I see, while deceiving themselves too.

It's strange that with a mythological woman,

Poets use her, at will, to draw our attention,

She can never age, is never old,

Cast in the same enticing mould,

Seduced when young, in age delights:

Enough, no age restricts a poet's flights.

FAUST

Then let her be as if no age has bound her!

As Achilles on Pherae once found her,

Beyond all ages. What rare luck:

In spite of every fate, to win her love!

And shall I, by the strength of my yearning,

Not draw that unique form towards me, living,

That eternal being, equal to the divine,

Great yet tender: kind as she's sublime.

You saw her once: today I too have seen her,

Lovely in her attraction: as lovely as desired.

Now my soul and being is strongly tied:

If I can't win her, I shan't survive.

CHIRON

Ah, stranger! You're enraptured like Mankind:

Among us Spirits you seem maddened, blind.

Yet now your fate is to be met with here:

Though only for a moment, every year,
I take the time to call on Manto, there,
Aesculapius' daughter: in silent prayer
Imploring her father to add to his fame,
Enlighten, at last, each rash doctor's brain,
And persuade them never to deal death again...

I like her best of all the crowd of Sibyls,
Free of grimaces, kind and generous:
If you stay with her, she's the power too,
To heal you totally: with herbs and roots.

FAUST

I don't need healing: my mind is filled with power:
There I'd become as base as others are.

CHIRON

Don't scorn the healing of the noble fount!
We've reached the place, so, quick, dismount!

FAUST

Tell me, where, through pebbly water,
In the gloomy night, you've brought us?

CHIRON

Here Greece and Rome braved the fight,
Olympus to your left, Peneus on the right,
The greatest empire lost here to the sand:
A king flees: and citizens win the land.
Gaze around! Famous Tempe is nearby,
Eternal, there, under the moonlit sky.

MANTO (Inside, dreaming.)

Horses' hooves sound
On sacred ground,
Demi-gods are nigh us.

CHIRON

Quite right!

Just open your eyes!

MANTO (Waking.)

Welcome! I see you don't keep away.

CHIRON

And your temple's still here to stay!

MANTO

You still gallop round, untiringly?

CHIRON

And you, as ever, sit peacefully,

While I enjoy circling round.

MANTO

I wait, and Time circles me I've found.

And him?

CHIRON

The shadowy night

Has whirled him to our sight.

Helen he wants to win,

Helen's maddening him.

And he doesn't know where or how to begin:

Above all he deserves the Aesculapian healing.

MANTO

I like the ones who want impossible things.

Chiron is already far off.

Rash man, advance, here's joy for you!

This dark path leads to Persephone too.

Under Olympus' hollow foot, stealing,

She listens for secret, forbidden greeting.

I smuggled Orpheus down here once before:

Use your chance better! Quick! Be sure!

They descend.

PART II ACT II SCENE IV: ON THE UPPER PENEUS AGAIN

THE SIRENS

Plunge now in Peneus' flood!

Here you can delight in swimming,

Song on song too, harmonising,

Does unlucky people good.

There's no healing without water!

With the shining crowd run we

Quick, to the Aegean Sea,

Where every joy's on offer.

An Earthquake.

The foaming wave sweeps wider,

Flowing in its bed no longer:

Earth shakes and waters roar,

Stony banks split once more.

We fly on! Come, one and all!

We'll not profit from this at all.

On! Each noble, happy guest,

To the ocean's cheerful zest,

Gleaming, where the trembling waves

Lightly heaving, wash the bays:

Where the moon's reflected light,

Wets with heaven's dew, at night.

There, a freely flowing life,

Here, an earthquake's fearful strife:

Every clever one, hasten on!

This place is a hideous one.

SEISMOS (Growling and jolting in the deep.)

Push again, with power,

With your shoulders, tower!

So the world above is ours,

Where all must yield to us.

THE SPHINXES

What a horrid shuddering,

Ugly, hideous juddering!

What a quivering and swaying,

Back and forwards, playing!

What an intolerable fuss!

But we'll not lose our place,

Even if all hell shakes.

Now a dome is lifted,

Wonderful. He's gifted

It to us, the ancient one,

Delos' isle was his creation,

Driven from out the wave,

To bring Latona aid.

He with striving, pushing, pressing,

Arms straight, and shoulders bending,

Like an Atlas in his action,

Lifts rock and earth, in motion,

Shingle, gravel, sand: the floors

All along our peaceful shores.

Rips our vale's quiet surface up,

Crosswise, with a single cut:

Fiercely, and unwearied,

A colossal caryatid,
Bears a fearsome weight of boulders,
Still buried, downwards to his shoulders:
But he'll come no further, now,
The Sphinxes' place is here, we vow.

SEISMOS

I myself achieved all this,
Man should admit it, finally:
If I'd not jolted and shaken it,
How could the world be so lovely? –
How could your peaks stand so high,
In the pure and splendid blue,
If I'd not pushed them to the sky,
Picturesque and charming too?
Then, thinking of my high ancestry,
Night and Chaos, I behaved badly,
And, a company of Titans, we
With Pelion and Ossa played madly,
Romping round in youthful glee,
Till, we tired of it, at last,
And set both mountains, wickedly,
On Parnassus, as a double hat....
There, now, Apollo's sweet retreat,
With the happy band of Muses.
And Jupiter, thunderbolts complete:
I even raised the high seat he uses.
So now with monstrous striving
I've pushed this upwards, from the deep,
And call, aloud, to their new being,
The joyful dwellers of the steep.

THE SPHINXES

One would think long ago,
This was lifted to the sky,
Had we not seen from down below,
How it wormed its way on high.
A bushy forest covers it,
And rock on rock is piled around:
Sphinxes don't care about it,
It won't disturb our sacred ground.

THE GRYPHONS

Gold in leaves, and gold in spangles,
Through the cracks, see, it tremble.
Don't you rob us of our treasure,
Ants, come, gather it together!

CHORUS OF ANTS

As this the giant ones
Threw to the sky,
You restless-footed ones,
Quick, climb it on high!
Rapidly in and out!
In cracks like these,
Every crumb about's
Worth you can seize.
You must uncover
Even the slightest,
In every corner
Quick as the brightest.
You must be everywhere,
Swarming around: then,
Only bring gold here!

Forget the mountain.

THE GRYPHONS

Come! Come! Heap the gold!

With our claws, we'll keep hold:

They are the best locks yet:

Great treasures they protect.

THE PYGMIES (Classical Dwarves.)

We've acquired some room,

How, it isn't clear.

Don't ask where we're from:

The main thing is we're here!

Life is cheerfully suited

To every sort of land:

Where a rock is lifted,

Dwarves are there, on hand.

Men and maids, quick and busy,

Exemplary, every pair:

In Paradise, once, maybe,

A similar race lived there.

But the best is here we find,

Thankfully our fate is blessed:

Mother Earth is always kind,

In the East as in the West.

THE DACTYLS (Little Ironworkers.)

If she can bring to light

The Little Ones in a night,

The Littlest Ones, she can make

And each will still find a mate.

THE PYGMY-ELDERS

Hurry: make space:

A convenient place!
Quickly, to work!
Strength, never shirk!
While we're in peace,
Our smithy increase,
To furnish the horde
With armour and sword.

All you ant-forms,
Moving in swarms,
Bring us the ore!
And all you Dactyls,
So many, so little,
You are commanded
To bring us the wood!
Heap it up higher,
Secretive fire,
Fetch coals as you should.

THE PYGMY GENERALISSIMO

Look lively, though,
With arrow and bow!
Shoot me the herons
Out in the ponds,
Countless they're nests,
Proud are their breasts,
Shoot them, together,
All in one blow!
So we can show
Helmets with feathers.

ANTS AND DACTYLS

Who now can save us!

We bring the iron
They forge the fetters.
It won't be soon
This thing will end,
Meanwhile we bend.

THE CRANES OF IBYCUS

Cries of murdered, calls of dying!
Fearful fluttering and flying!
Such deep moans, and such groans
Carry to our airy zones!
All already slaughtered,
Blood is reddening the water,
Misshapen dwarfish passions,
Steal the herons' noblest gems.
Now they're waving on their helmets:
Those fat-bellied bow-legged serpents.
You our armies' members,
Files of ocean-wanderers,
You we call to vengeance,
To kin-related business.
No one spare his strength or blood!
Show hatred always to that brood!
(They disperse, croaking.)

MEPHISTOPHELES

(On the plain.)
Northern witches were easily controlled,
But over foreign spirits I've no hold.
The Blocksberg's a most convenient locale,
Wherever you are, you'll find yourself there still.
Dame Ilse watches for us, from her tall stone,

And Heinrich's still awake on his high throne,
At Elend, the Snorers snore away,
All's done for a thousand years and a day.
Who knows here if, where he sits, you see,
The Earth won't swell up beneath his feet?....
I wander happily through a level valley,
And in a moment there, thrown up behind me,
A mountain, true it's hardly to be called one,
But high enough to hide the Sphinxes' home –
Still, the valley breeds many a fire here,
And so illuminates this mad affair....
The magic sparks of that charming chorus.
Still enticing, vanishing, hover near us.
Gently now! All too used to nibbling,
Wherever we are, we find ourselves snatching.
THE LAMIAE (Drawing Mephistopheles after them.)
Faster, and faster!
And ever further!
Then hover again,
Chattering, staying.
It's such a pleasure,
To make the old sinner,
Pursue us, at whim,
Doing hard penance.
See, with his lame stance,
He hobbles forwards,
He stumbles onwards:
Trailing his leg, mind:
As we flee from him
He follows behind!

MEPHISTOPHELES (Standing still.)
Cursed fate! Cheated every which way!
Since Adam, seduced and led astray!
We grow old, but who grows wise?
Now, I'm tormented to the skies!
We know they're a wholly useless sex,
With laced-in bodies, and painted looks.
No healthy response at all, at bottom,
Wherever you grip, their limbs are rotten.
We know, we see, we grasp their ways,
But still we dance when woman plays!

THE LAMIAE (Pausing.)

Stop! He thinks: pauses: stays too:
Return, then, lest he should escape you!

MEPHISTOPHELES (Striding forwards.)

On, then! And let no indecision
Grip my flesh, some foolish cavil:
Since if there were no witches given,
Who the devil'd want to be a devil!

THE LAMIAE (Very graciously.)

We are circling round the hero!
Let love, in his heart, be sure to
Choose one of us for certain though.

MEPHISTOPHELES

True, in this uncertain shimmer,
You seem pretty girls together,
I'd like not to scorn you so.

EMPUSA (The demon. Pressing forward.)

Nor me! I'm the very thing,
Let me join your following.

THE LAMIAE

She's one too many in our crowd,
She'll spoil our game if she's allowed.

EMPUSA (To Mephistopheles.)

Greetings from Empusa, to you,
Your cousin, with the ass's hoof!
You've only a horse's hoof, it's true,
Yet, cousin, all the best to you!

MEPHISTOPHELES

I thought there were only strangers here,
Sadly, now, relatives appear:
It's the old story: in their dozens,
From Hartz to Hellas, always cousins!

EMPUSA

I act quickly with decision,
I can alter to your vision:
But to honour you today
My ass's head I display.

MEPHISTOPHELES

I see great things are signified,
By the relationship implied:
Be that as it may, yet I,
The ass's head will still deny.

THE LAMIAE

That ugly thing gives the frights,
To all that's lovely and delights:
The lovely and delightful before,
When she arrives, are so no more!

MEPHISTOPHELES

These cousins too, so soft and slender,

Are all suspicious, all that gender:
And beneath their cheeks, those roses,
There too, I fear, are metamorphoses.

THE LAMIAE

Try us then! We're many.
Grasp! And if you're lucky,
Secure the finest prize.
What was all that lusting for?
You're a miserable suitor,
Strutting, boasting of your size! –
Now he's mixing with our crowd:
Drop your masks: you're allowed:
And bare your being to his eyes.

MEPHISTOPHELES

I've chosen the loveliest one...
(Clasping her.)
Oh! What a skinny broom!
(Clasping another.)
And this one?...Wizened looks!

THE LAMIAE

You're worth better? Not in our books.

MEPHISTOPHELES

That little one might suit my plans...
A lizard gliding through my hands!
And snakelike are her slippery tresses.
I try the tall one to compare...
I grip a thyrsus without hair,
A pinecone, for a head, impresses!
What next?...A fat one, see,
Perhaps she'll enliven me:

Let's risk it, then! Here she is!
So puffy, flabby, in the East
There they'd prize her looks, at least...
But, oh! The puff-ball's split!

THE LAMIAE

Scatter widely, swaying, floating,
Surround him in dark flight, like lightning,
The trespassing witch's son!
Circles, terrifying, winging!
Bat-like in a silent flickering!
He'll be grateful when we've done.

MEPHISTOPHELES (Shaking himself.)

I'm no cleverer it seems, at all:
Here's absurd, and so's the north,
Here and there, the spirits tricky,
Poetry and people tacky.
Here too it's masquerade, I find:
As everywhere, the dance of mind.
I grasped a lovely masked procession,
And caught things from a horror show...
I'd gladly settle for a false impression,
If it would last a little longer, though.
(He loses his way among the rocks.)
Where am I now? Where will it wander?
There was a path, now it's a horror.
I got here by smooth and level ways,
And now the scree prevents escape.
I clamber up and down in vain,
How shall I find the Sphinx again?
I've never known anything like it, quite,

A mountain range in a single night!
I call it a lively witches' ride,
They've brought the Blocksberg, beside.
AN OREAD (A mountain nymph, from the natural rock.)
Climb up here! My range is old,
In primeval forms the peaks unfold.
Respect the steep and rocky stair,
Pindus' last slopes stretch there!
Unshakeable, once I stood, as now,
When Pompey fled across my brow.
Beside me, illusion's stones will go,
As soon as ever the cock shall crow.
I often see such fables thrown on high,
And suddenly sink back again and die.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Honour to you, you noble length,
Garlanded high with oaken strength!
The clearest moonlight never weaves
Through the darkness of your leaves –
I see a light, with parting glow,
Through the silent bushes go.
How all things come together!
Homunculus it is who's there!
Which way now, little fellow?

HOMUNCULUS

I flit about from hill to hollow
And, in the truest sense, I'd gladly 'be',
I'm so impatient, now, to smash the glass:
Only, so far, given what I can see,
I wouldn't want to do it in this pass.

But in confidence I confess I was
On the trail of two philosophers,
All I heard them say was: Nature, Nature!
I'll not part from them for anything,
They must know about earthly being:
And in the end I'll find out, too,
The cleverest place to travel to.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Well, do it on your own behalf, here.
Where the spirits all find their place,
The Philosopher can show his face.
To please you with his art and favour,
He'll make you a dozen, any flavour.
You'll have no intellect, unless you err.
If you want to 'be', make it your own affair!

HOMUNCULUS

Good advice too is not to be disdained.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Then off with you! I'll look around again.
They part.

ANAXAGORAS (To Thales.)

The stubborn mind will never ever bend:
What more do you need to be enlightened?

THALES

The waves will gladly bow to every wind,
Yet far from the jagged cliffs they'll end.

ANAXAGORAS

This cliff came about by fiery vapours.

THALES

By moisture living things were created.

HOMUNCULUS (Between the two.)

Let me walk beside you, please.

I myself desire to 'be'!

ANAXAGORAS

Have you, O Thales, in a single night

Brought a mount, from mud, to light?

THALES

Never has nature in her living flow,

Been bound to day, night, and hours, though.

She creates every form by rule,

At her greatest, force is never her tool.

ANAXAGORAS

Here it was! Furious Plutonic fire,

Monstrous Aeolian vapours thrown higher,

Broke through the ancient earth's smooth crust,

And raised the new mount with a swift up-thrust.

THALES

What more will come of it?

It's there, that's fine: let it sit.

One loses time in remonstrance,

And only leads the patient folk a dance.

ANAXAGORAS

The Mount quickly filled with Myrmidons,

Living in the rocky clefts and caverns:

Pygmies, ants and fingerlings,

And other active little things.

(To Homunculus.)

You've not striven hard for greatness,

Lived hermit-like, in narrowness:

If you can accustom yourself to power,

I'll crown you their king, in an hour.

HOMUNCULUS

What does Thales say?

THALES

It's not my recommendation:

With small means, you'll only do small actions:

With great means, the small achieve great ones.

Look there! A dark cloud, see, the cranes come!

So the excitable crowd will threaten,

And they would threaten the king so.

With sharpened beak, and grasping claw,

They tread the small ones to the floor:

Fate falls like lightning on those below.

It was a crime to kill the herons,

Caught on their quiet and peaceful ponds.

But that rain of arrowed slaughter,

Brings cruel and bloody vengeance after,

Summons the anger of their kin above,

To spill the Pygmies' guilty blood.

What need for helmets, shields and spears?

What use the dwarves' heron-feather?

How Dactyls and Ants hide together!

The army wavers, flies, and disappears.

ANAXAGORAS (After a moment, solemnly.)

Till now I've praised the subterranean powers,

But turn, in this case, to higher ones than ours...

You! Above, always evergreen,

Triple-named, triply to be seen,

I cry to you, by my people's woe,

Diana, Luna, Hecate, so!

You, in deepest thought, the heartening,
You power profound, calmly shining,
Reveal your dark side's fearful shower,
Without spells, show your ancient power!

(A pause).

Am I heard so swiftly?

Has my cry

To the deep sky

Stirred Nature's ranks so quickly?

Already, greater, greater, nearing,

The Goddess' orb'd throne appearing,

Monstrous, fearful to the sight!

With fires that redden in the night...

No closer, threatening disc of power!

You'll straight destroy us: sea and shore!

So it was true, the Thessalian women,

Trusted with wicked magic runes,

Enchanted you from your circling path,

Wrested evil things from you, in wrath?...

The bright shield now darkens,

Suddenly splits: flashes, sparkles!

What a hissing! What a drumming!

Thunder, wind, and rain are coming! –

Humbled, on the steps of your throne! –

Forgive me! I brought this on, alone.

(He throws himself on his face.)

THALES

What has this man not heard and seen!

I'm not sure what it was that's been,

I'm not sensitive to it like him, I find.

We'd confess, these are crazy times,
The Moon is quivering quite gently,
In her place, though, just as formerly.

HOMUNCULUS

Look there, at the Pygmies seat!
The mount was round, now it's a peak.
I felt the monstrous recoil's thunder,
A rock fell from the Moon up yonder:
All alike, without asking too,
Friend and foe it squashed and slew.
I have to praise powers like those,
All creation in a single night,
Alike up there as down below,
Bringing a mountain-heap to light.

THALES

Peace! It was just an imaginary sight.
So farewell to that ugly brood!
You didn't become king, that's good.
Off now to the sea-festival, joy-blessed,
Where they'll honour a marvellous guest.
They exit.

MEPHISTOPHELES (Climbing up the opposite side.)

I'll have to climb through these steep rocks,
Through the roots of ancient oaks!
In my Hartz range, the smell of resin
Has a hint of pitch, almost as pleasant
As sulphur...but here, among the Greeks,
There's not a sniff, wherever one seeks:
But I'm still rather curious to know
How they make hellfire and brimstone glow.

A DRYAD (A wood nymph.)

In your own land, you're naturally adept,
Abroad, you don't know enough as yet.
You shouldn't think about home, here
With these ancient oak trees to revere.

MEPHISTOPHELES

One thinks of all one's left: besides,
What one's used to is paradise.
But tell me what's in that cave
Dimly crouching, a triple shape?

THE DRYAD

Daughters of Phorkyas! Enter the place,
And speak to them, if you're not afraid.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Why not! – I'll look, and I'm amazed!
Proud as I am, I must confess, though,
I've never seen the likes of those,
They're as foul as Ugliness any day....

How can one find deadly sin

Ugly at all when one has seen

This triple monstrosity?

We wouldn't let them cross the sill

Of the worst chamber of our hell.

But here, in the land of beauty, all things Greek,

Are famous now because they're so antique...

They seem to scent my presence: stirring,

Like vampire bats, squeaking, twittering.

THE PHORKYADS (The Three Graeae.)

Give me the eye, Sisters, so I can find

Who's wandering so near our shrine.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Most Revered! Allow me near,
To receive a triple blessing here.
I come, as yet unknown it's true,
But distantly related, I think, to you.
I've already seen the elder gods,
Bowed low before Rhea and Ops:
I even saw the Fates, your sisters,
Yesterday, or the day before:
But I've never seen the likes of you.
I'm silenced now, and delighted too.

THE PHORKYADS

This spirit seems to have some sense.

MEPHISTOPHELES

I'm amazed no poet's had the intelligence
To sing of you. Tell me, how can that be?
I've never seen you properly painted:
The chisel should only try to carve you,
Not the likes of Pallas, Venus, Juno.

THE PHORKYADS

Deep in solitude and stillest night,
No one ever thought to show us three aright.

MEPHISTOPHELES

How could they? Here, concealed from view.
You can't see anyone: and they can't see you.
You need to achieve a suitable place,
Where art and splendour share the space,
Where every day, as walking, living heroes,
With giant steps, each block of marble goes.
Where –

THE PHORKYADS

Be silent, and don't tempt us to roam!
What use would it be to us, to be better known?
Born in the night, and related to the night,
To ourselves, almost: to others quite out of sight.

MEPHISTOPHELES

In that case, there's little more to say:
One can oneself to others still betray.
One eye's enough for three, one tooth as well:
Then it should be mythically possible,
To contain three beings in two,
And leave me the third form, too.
For a little while.

A PHORKYAD

What do you think? Shall we try?

THE OTHERS

Let's! – But without the tooth and eye.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Now you've denied me the best features of all:
How can I show your strict and perfect form?

A PHORKYAD

Shut one eye, that's easy to do,
Let one greedy tooth show too,
In profile you'll at once achieve
A sisterly likeness, to deceive.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Many thanks! Done!

THE PHORKYADS

Done!

MEPHISTOPHELES (As a Phorkyad, in profile.)

Already I'm one,
Of Chaos's well-beloved sons!

THE PHORKYADS

We're Chaos's daughters, of undisputed right.

MEPHISTOPHELES

O shame, now I'll be called a hermaphrodite.

THE PHORKYADS

What a beauty in our sisterly trio!

We've two eyes, and two teeth now.

MEPHISTOPHELES

I'll hide myself from every eye, as well,

And frighten devils in the lakes of Hell.

(He exits.)

PART II ACT II SCENE V: ROCKY COVES IN THE AEGEAN SEA

The Moon, lingering, at the zenith.

THE SIRENS (Lying on the cliffs round about, playing flutes and singing.)

Though the Thessalian witch-women

Wickedly, dragged you down to them,

With their horrors, long ago, in the dark,

Look quietly down, now, from the arc

Of night, on waves of glittering sparks:

Mildly flashing, bright crowds, these:

Shine now upon the swelling seas,

Which raise themselves from the deep!

We're sworn to serve you, thus,

Sweet Luna, show grace to us.

THE NEREIDS AND TRITONS (As marvels of the deep.)

Sound out loud, with clearer tones,
Ringing through the sea's wide zones:
Call the peoples of the deep!
Before the storm's ravening face,
We sank to the stillest place,
Now we're drawn, by singing, sweet.
See, how we've adorned ourselves,
In our great delight, as well,
With our crowns, so nobly gemmed,
And our belts with spangles hemmed!
These spoils, now, before you, we lay,
Treasures, shipwrecked here, and swallowed,
Your enticing songs they followed,
You the daemons of our bay.

THE SIRENS

We know well, in ocean freshness,
Fishes play in slippery smoothness,
Flickering lives, devoid of pain:
Yet you festive crowds that stray
We would rather find today,
That you're more than fish, again.

THE NEREIDS AND TRITONS

Before we came to meet you,
We were thinking of that too:
Speed away now, sisters: brothers!
It only needs the slightest journey,
For most effective proof that we,
Certainly, are more than fishes.

(They swim off.)

THE SIRENS

They've vanished in a moment!
To Samothrace they're bent,
Gone, with a favourable breeze.
What is it they think they'll see,
In the realm of the noble Cabiri?
They're gods! But wondrously strange,
Always causing their forms to change,
Never knowing what they might be.
Stay at your clear height,
Sweet Luna, graceful light,
So we'll remain nocturnal,
Not chased by the diurnal!

THALES (On the shore, to Homunculus.)

I'd gladly lead you to old Nereus:
His home's not far away and cavernous,
But his head, it's of the very stubbornest,
He's a sour-top, and quite the nastiest.
The whole human race can't satisfy
Him, the grumbler, and needn't try.
Yet to him the future is revealed,
And so all show respect, and yield
Him honour in his high position:
He's done quite well by many a one.

HOMUNCULUS

Then let's try him, and hurry on!
My glass and flame won't fail our mission.

NEREUS (The sea-god.)

Are those human voices, in my ear?
How quickly my deepest anger stirs!
Forms, reaching for the gods, in their endeavour,

Yet condemned to be themselves, forever.
In ancient times I had heavenly rest,
Yet drove myself to act well to the best:
And then, when I'd finished what I'd done,
It was quite clear that nothing had been won.

THALES

And yet, Old Man of the Sea, we trust you:
You're the Wise: so don't drive us from you!
See this flame, he's almost human, really,
He yields himself to your advice, completely.

NEREUS

What advice! Has Mankind valued my advice?
A wise word's frozen in a stubborn ear.
No matter how often some harsh action strikes,
People remain as self-willed as before.
I warned Paris himself, in a fatherly way,
Before the foreign girl tempted him to stray.
He stood bravely on the shore of Greece,
And I told him what my Spirit could see:
The smoke-filled air, the streaming blood,
Glowing timbers, slaughter's flood,
Troy's day of judgement, caught in verse,
Its horrors known for ten thousand years.
The old man's words seemed idle to the young,
He followed his need, and Ilium was gone –
A bloody corpse, frozen with ancient pain,
For Pindus' eagles, a literary gain.
Ulysses too! Didn't I tell him about
Circe's wiles, that Cyclopean lout?
The indecision in his own shallow mind,

And all of it! What benefit did he find?
Till, late indeed, the ocean favoured him more,
And brought him, wave-tossed, to a friendly shore.

THALES

Such behaviour brings the wise man pain,
Yet the good will chance it all again.
An ounce of thanks will still please them deeply,
Outweighing tons of ingratitude completely.
And it's nothing slight we ask of you:
The boy here wants to exist, and wisely too.

NEREUS

Don't ruin such a rare mood as this!
Greater needs await me, today, than his:
I've summoned all my daughters here to me,
The Dorides, the Graces of the Sea.
Neither Olympus, nor your lands can show
Such lovely forms, with such delicate flow,
They fling themselves, with graceful actions,
From sea-horses to Neptune's stallions,
Blending so sensitively with the element,
That they seem made of foam, to all intent.
In a play of colours, on Venus' chariot shell,
Galatea, the loveliest, comes to me, as well,
Who, since Cypris turned away from us,
Rules as the new divinity of Paphos.
And so, heiress, for ages now, the sweet one,
Holds town, and temple, chariot and throne.
Away! It's time for a father's enjoyments,
Hearts without hate, lips without judgements.
Away, to Proteus! Ask that wondrous man:

How man exists, and changes, if he can.

(He vanishes into the sea.)

THALES

We'll achieve nothing by that game,

Meet Proteus: he'll vanish, just the same:

And if he stays, he'll only tell you,

What will amaze you, and confuse you.

But you've need of such advice,

Well, make tracks, then, and we'll try!

(They depart.)

THE SIRENS (On the rocks above.)

What is it we see whitening

The realms of ocean, brightening?

As when the wind prevails,

And shows the snowy sails,

So the Ocean's daughters,

Transfigured, light the waters.

Let us clamber shore-wards,

So we can hear their voices.

THE NEREIDS AND TRITONS

What in our hands we treasure,

Will give you all great pleasure.

Chelone's turtle shield

The shining form we wield:

On it gods we're bringing:

Your noblest songs, be singing.

THE SIRENS

Little in form,

Great in the storm,

Saving the shipwrecked,

Gods always respected.

THE NEREID AND TRITONS

We bring the peaceful Cabiri
To lead in your festivity,
Since in their holy presence,
Neptune's always pleasant.

THE SIRENS

We're attendant on you:
When a ship broke in two,
Their sovereign power too,
Protected the crew.

THE NEREIDS AND TRITONS

We've brought three of them along,
The fourth said he wouldn't come:
He said he was the real one,
The only thinker of the squadron.

THE SIRENS

One god will always mock
At some other god.
Honour all their courtesy,
Be fearful of their injury.

THE NEREIDS AND TRITONS

Actually, there are seven.

THE SIRENS

Where are the other three, then?

THE NEREIDS AND TRITONS

We really can't tell you that,
On Olympus one might ask:
There the eighth pines away,
No one thinks of him today!

Granted us in mercy,
But not yet completely.
These, the incomparable,
Ever wider yearning,
Hungering, are longing
For the unattainable.

THE SIRENS

We're ones who know
Where it's enthroned,
To moon and to sun,
We pray: and it's done.

THE NEREIDS AND TRITONS

See how our great glory grows,
We lead them to the feast!

THE SIRENS

The heroes of ancient story,
Are deficient now in glory,
Whatever we might be told:
Though they won the fleece of gold,
You're the Cabiri.

(Repeated as a full chorus.)

'Though they won the fleece of gold,
We're the Cabiri'.

(The Nereids and Tritons move past.)

HOMUNCULUS

I see these unformed ones,
Like pots of shoddy clay,
Against them wise men run,
And break their heads today.

THALES

That's what men ask of the dust:

The coin gains value from its rust.

PROTEUS (Unnoticed.)

It pleases me, an old connoisseur of fable!

The odder it is, the more respectable.

THALES

Where are you, Proteus?

PROTEUS (Like a ventriloquist, apparently far, and close to.)

Here! Here, too!

THALES

An old joke, which I'll forgive you:

No idle words for a friend, please!

I know you're trying to deceive.

PROTEUS (As if from the distance.)

Farewell!

THALES (Quietly to Homunculus.)

He's quite near. So, light, afresh!

He's just as curious as any fish:

And whatever form he hides in,

A flame will easily entice him.

HOMUNCULUS

I'll pour out a whole flood of light,

But soft, so the glass is still all right.

PROTEUS (In the form of a giant turtle.)

What shines with such grace and beauty?

THALES (Covering up Homunculus.)

Good! If you wish, come close to see.

It's worth a little trouble, if you can:

Show yourself two-footed like a man.

At our discretion, and by our favour.

We'll show you what we're hiding here.

PROTEUS (In a noble form.)

You still know all the worldly tricks.

THALES

Changing shape is what you still like best.

(He reveals Homunculus.)

PROTEUS (Astonished.)

A shining dwarf! That, I've never seen!

THALES

He seeks advice, and would gladly 'be'.

He is, as I've heard him say before,

Quite miraculously, only half born.

He's not lacking in mental qualities,

But short of physical capabilities:

Only the glass has given him weight at all,

He'd gladly be embodied, first of all.

PROTEUS

You are a true virgin's son,

Before you should be, you're already one!

THALES (Whispering.)

From another point of view, it's critical:

I think it makes him hermaphroditical.

PROTEUS

All the easier to achieve success:

Whatever he gets will suit him best.

No need to think about it here:

In the ocean deep you must appear!

There, first, in miniature, one snatches,

Enjoying the smallest things to swallow,

Bigger and bigger, with what one catches,

Forming the higher being to follow.

HOMUNCULUS

Here quite gentle breezes blow,

It's open: the fragrance delights me so!

PROTEUS

I think so too, loveliest of youths!

And, further on, it's more enjoyable:

On that shoreline's slender tooth,

The watery halo's indescribable.

There we'll see the crowds near to,

Drifting smoothly, to our view,

Come with me!

THALES

I'll keep you company.

HOMUNCULUS

A triply odd spirit-journey!

PART II ACT II SCENE VI: THE TELCHINES OF RHODES

The Telchines, on sea-horses and dragons, wielding Neptune's trident.

CHORUS OF TELCHINES (The nine dog-headed Children of the Sea)

Oh, we are the ones who once forged Neptune's trident,

With which he controls the tumultuous torrent.

When the thunder erupts from the heavens, and rumbles,

Neptune will reply to those terrible grumbles:

And however the lightning zig-zags above us,

Breaker upon breaker beneath will splash upwards:

And whatever struggles between them in terror,

Long hurled all about, the deep seas will devour:

And that's why he's loaned us his sceptre today –
Now we float, calm and light, in our festive display.

THE SIRENS

You, to Helios consecrated,
You, with bright day's blessing freighted,
Greetings to this hour when
Luna's high worship rules again!

THE TELCHINES

Loveliest goddess of all in your sphere above!
To hear your brother praised, is something you love.
To blessed Rhodes lend an ear, now, from the sky,
Where an endless Paeon, to him, rises on high.
He begins the day's course: he ends it again,
He eyes us all with his radiant fiery eye, then.
The mountains, the city, the sea and the strand,
Please the great god, lovely and bright is the land.
No mist drifts above us, and if one appears,
A ray, and a breeze: and the island shows clear!
There the high god's in hundreds of statues displayed,
As a youth, and a giant, the mild and the grave.
We were the first to carve forms: we began
The depiction of gods in the image of Man.

PROTEUS

Let them sing on then, and let them boast!
To the sun's sacred rays, a living host,
All their works are an empty jest.
They melt and shape untiringly:
And once, in bronze, it's plain to see,
They think they've caught the very best.
What happens at last to these proud ones?

The god's statues standing high –
An earthquake tosses to the sky:
Long since, they're all melted down.
Earth's toil, whatever else it may be,
Is nothing still, but drudgery:
The waves grant a life that's better:
I'll bear you to eternal waters.

AS PROTEUS-DOLPHIN (Transforming himself.)

That's soon done!

Now you'll find your fairest luck:
I'm carrying you across my back,
To wed you with the ocean.

THALES

Yield to your praiseworthy wish,
Start at the beginning, with the fish!
Be ready for the swiftest working!
Be ruled by the eternal norms,
Move through a thousand, thousand forms,
And you'll ascend in time to Man.

PROTEUS

With spirit, join the watery plan,
Equal in size, where all began,
And move here as you wish to do:
Don't wrestle with the higher orders:
Once man, inside mankind's borders,
Then all will be over with you.

THALES

That's as may be: it's still fine,
To be a real man, in your own time.

PROTEUS (To Thales.)

As long as it's someone of your kind!
You don't just live for some brief time:
With your pale and ghostly peers,
I've watched you already for hundreds of years.

THE SIRENS (On the rocky cliffs.)

What's that ring of little clouds, set
In a circle round the moon?

They are doves, by love ignited,
Winged, white as winter noon.

All her ardent flocks of birds:

Paphos, now, has sent to us,
So our festival's completed,
Sweet and clear our happy bliss!

NEREUS (Approaching Thales.)

Though some nocturnal wanderer
Might call it only airy moonshine:
We spirits think it something other,
It's one true meaning we can find:

They are doves that accompany
My daughter in her moving shell.

Wondrous flights of artistry,
Learnt in ancient times, as well.

THALES

I too think that thing is best,
That can please the real man,
And in warm and silent nest,
Keep living Sacredness to hand.

PSYLLI AND MARSI

(Peoples of Italy and North Africa. On sea-bulls, sea-heifers and sea-rams.)

In the hollow caves of Cyprus

Not yet rocked, by the sea-god,
Not yet shaken, by old Seismos,
Breathed on, by eternal breezes,
And, as in the ancient days,
Delighting in peaceful ways,
With us Venus' chariot stays,
And through nocturnal murmurs,
Through the sweet entwining waters,
We lead the loveliest of daughters,
Unseen by newer generation.

Travelling on our gentle journey
No winged lion, or eagle fear we,
Neither cross nor crescent,
Though it's throned in heaven,
Though it moves and sways,
Though it drives and slays,
Crops, towns, in ruin lays.

We, swiftly bring on
The loveliest of women.

THE SIRENS

Lightly now, and gently go,
Round the chariot, ring on ring,
Often weaving, row by row,
All in order, round it, snaking,
Approach you active Nereids
Sturdy women, sweetly wild,
Tender Dorides bring, amidst,
Galatea, Mother's child:
Most, so goddess-like her calm,
Worthy of immortality,

Yet enticing, with her charm,
As human femininity.

THE DORIDES (In Chorus, mounted on dolphins, passing Nereus.)

Lend us, Luna, light and shadow,
Clarity for flowering youth!
Charming husbands here we show:
Plead for them with our father, too.
(To Nereus.)

They are boys, whom we rescued
From the breaker's teeth, and then,
In the reeds and mosses bedded,
Warmed them back to life again,
Now with glowing kisses they
Must thank us truly here today:
Look with favour now on them!

NEREUS

Here there's a dual prize, I find, to treasure:
You show compassion, and it brings you pleasure.

THE DORIDES

Father, praise our mission, all,
And sanction our fond request,
Let us hold them fast, immortal,
On each young eternal breast.

NEREUS

Be happy with your handsome catch,
Accept the youngsters here, as men:
I can't myself grant what you ask,
Since Zeus alone can make it happen.
The waves that heave and rock you
Leave no place for love to stand,

So when this inclination leaves you,
Send them quietly back to land.

THE DORIDES

Sweet boys, you are so dear to us,
But sadly we must separate:
We asked eternal faithfulness,
But the gods forbid that fate.

THE YOUNG MEN

We're the valiant sailor lads,
If you'd refresh us further,
We've never had it quite so good
And we'll never have it better.
Galatea approaches on her shell-chariot.

NEREUS

It's you, my darling!

GALATEA

O father! Delight!
Linger, you dolphins, I'm gripped by the sight.

NEREUS

Past already, they're moving past,
Wheeling in circular motion:
What care they for the heart's deep emotion!
Ah, if they'd just take me with them, at last!
And yet, a single glance gives here,
Something that will last all year.

THALES

Hail! Hail! Anew!
How happy I feel, too,
Pierced by the Beautiful and True....
All things came from the watery view!

All things are sustained by water!
Ocean, grant us your realm forever.
If you didn't produce the clouds,
No flowing streams would be allowed,
The rivers wouldn't roar and shout,
The streams would never bubble out,
Where would hill, plain, and world be then?
The freshness of life's what you maintain.
AN ECHO (A chorus from the collective circles.)
The freshness of life flows back from you, again.

NEREUS

Floating, turning, they change place,
Far off, no longer face to face:
In extended linking circles,
Appropriate to the festival,
The countless company's weaving.
But Galatea's throne of shell,
I see it clearly: see it still.
It gleams like a star,
Through the throng,
A crowd, the Beloved shines among!
Though just as far,
It shimmers bright and clear,
Always true, and near.

HOMUNCULUS

In this delightful ocean
Whatever I may shine on,
Is all sweet and fair.

PROTEUS

In this living ocean,

You light's shining motion,
First rings in splendour there.

NEREUS

At the heart of the throng, what mystery
Offers itself for our eyes to see?
What shines round the shell, at Galatea's feet?
Now waxing powerful, now gentle and sweet,
As if it were fed by the pulses of Love.

THALES

Homunculus, drawn there by Proteus....
Those are the symptoms of imperious yearning,
I'd expect now the sound of an anguished ringing:
He'll shatter himself on the glittering throne:
He glitters, he flashes, already, it's done.

THE SIRENS

What fiery wonder transfigures the waves, there,
As one on another sparkles and breaks, there?
It flashes and flickers and brightens towards us:
The nocturnal tracks of the bodies shine round us,
And everything near is surrounded with flame:
So let Eros rule, now: who started the game!

Hail to the sea! Hail to the waves!

Circled, now, by the sacred blaze!

Hail to water! Hail to fire!

Hail to the rarest sweet desire!

ALL IN CHORUS

Hail, the gently flowing breeze!

Hail, hidden caverns of the seas!

Be honoured now, for evermore,

You, the Elemental four!

**PART II ACT III SCENE I: BEFORE THE PALACE OF MENELAUS
IN SPARTA**

Helen enters with the Chorus of Captive Trojan Women. Panthalis is leader of the Chorus.

HELEN

I, Helen the much admired yet much reviled,
Come from the shore, where recently we landed,
Still drunk with the violent rocking of those waves
That from Phrygian heights on high-arched backs,
By Poseidon's favour, and the East Wind's power,
Carried us here to the coast of my native land.
There, below us, beside his bravest soldiers
King Menelaus, now, celebrates his return.
But you, bid me welcome, you, the lofty house
Tyndareus my father built when he returned,
Close by the slope of Pallas Athene's hill:
Here, where with Clytemnestra, in sisterhood, I
And Castor and Pollux, grew and happily played:
You, more nobly adorned than all Sparta's houses.
Be greeted by me, you honoured double doors!
Once, Menelaus the shining bridegroom came
To me, through your friendly inviting portals,
I, the one singled out from among so many.
Open to me once more, so that I might fulfil,
The King's command, truly, as a wife should.
Let me pass! And let everything be left behind,
That raged round me, till now, so full of doom.
For since, light in heart, I left this place behind,

Seeking out Venus' temple, in sacred duty,
Where instead a Trojan robber abducted me,
Many things have happened, men, far and wide,
Gladly tell of, though she's not so glad to hear them,
Round whom the story grew, and myth was spun.

CHORUS

O marvellous woman, don't disdain
Inheritance of the noblest estate!
For the highest fate's granted to you alone,
The glory of beauty that towers above all.
The Hero's name sounds his advance,
And proudly he strides:
But he bows down, most stubborn of men,
Before conquering Beauty, in mind and sense.

HELEN

Enough of that! I'm brought here by my husband,
I've been sent ahead by him, now, to his city:
But what the meaning of it is I can hardly guess.
Do I come as his wife? Do I come as the Queen?
Or a sacrifice, for a Prince's bitter pain,
And the ill fortune long endured by the Greeks?
I'm conquered: but am I a prisoner? I can't tell!
True, the Immortals appointed Fame, and Fate,
As the two ambiguous, doubtful companions
Of Beauty, to stand here at this threshold with me,
The gloomy, threatening presences by my side.
Even in the hollow ship my husband seldom
Gazed at me, or spoke an encouraging word.
He sat in front of me, as if in evil thought.
But scarcely had the foremost ship's prow greeted

Land, in that deep bay Eurotas' mouth has made,
Than he spoke to us, as the gods had urged him:
'Here my soldiers will disembark in ordered ranks,
I'll muster them, ranged along the ocean's-shore:
But you'll go on, ever on along the banks
Of sacred Eurotas, shining with bright orchards,
Guide the horses through gleaming water meadows,
Till of your lovely journey you make an end,
Where Lacedemon, once a rich spreading field,
Surrounded by austere mountains, was created.
Walk through the high-towered house of princes,
And summon the capable old Stewardess
Along with the maidservants I left behind,
Let her display the store of rich treasure to you,
That which your father left, and that I myself
Have added to, amassing it in war and peace.
You'll find it all still in the most perfect order:
It is a prince's privilege that he should find
That all is loyalty, on returning to his house,
All that he's left behind still in its proper place.
Since no slave has the power to effect a change.'

CHORUS

Let this treasure, so steadily massed,
Bring you delight, now, in eye and breast!
For the necklace bright, and the crown of gold,
Were resting, and darkening, in proud repose:
But enter now, and claim them all,
They'll quickly respond.
I love to see Beauty itself compete
Against gold and pearls and glittering gems.

HELEN

So again there came my lord's imperious speech:

'When you've examined all of it in due order,

Take as many tripods as you think you'll need,

And as many vessels as sacrifice requires,

To fulfil the customs of the sacred rites.

Take cauldrons, and basins, and circular bowls:

The purest of water from the holy fountains,

In deep urns: take care that you've dry wood too,

Such as will quickly catch fire, and hold all ready:

And finally don't forget a well-honed knife:

Everything else I'll leave for your decision.'

So he spoke, at the same time urging my going:

But he who commanded marked out nothing living

To be slain: to honour the Olympian gods.

Essential, but I'll think no more about it,

And leave all things in the hands of the gods:

They fulfil whatever is in their mind to do,

Whether or not we think it good or evil:

In either case we mortals must endure it.

Often the priest's heavy axe has been lifted,

From the bowed neck of the sacrificial victim,

So he could not slaughter it, being hindered,

By enemies near, or the gods' intervention.

CHORUS

What might happen, think not of that:

Queen, go on, now, step inside,

And be brave!

Good and evil come

Unannounced, to Mankind:

Though it's proclaimed, we'll not believe.

Troy still burned: did we not see

Death in our faces, shameful death:

And are we not here,

Your friends, happily serving,

Seeing the blinding sun in the sky

Seeing the Loveliest on Earth,

You, the kind: we the joyous?

HELEN

Let it be, as it will! Whatever awaits me,

I must go, swiftly, up to that royal house,

Long forsaken, often longed for, almost lost,

That's before my eyes once more: I know not how.

My feet don't carry me onwards so bravely, now,

Up those high steps, I skipped over as a child.

CHORUS

Sorrowful prisoners,

Oh, cast away, Sisters,

All your pain, to the winds:

Share in your mistress' joy

Share now in Helen's joy,

Who returns, truly late indeed,

To her father's hearth and home,

But with all the more firm a step,

Delightedly approaching.

Praise the sacred gods,

Creating happiness,

Bringing the wanderer home!

See the freed prisoner

Soar on uplifted wings,

Over harshness, while, all in vain,
The captives, so full of longing,
Pine away, arms still outstretched,
To the walls of their prison.
But a god snatched her up, then,
The far-exiled:
And from Ilium's fall,
Carried her back once more, home
To the old, to the newly adorned, her
Father's house,
From unspeakable
Rapture and torment,
Now, reborn, to remember
The days of her childhood.

PANTHALIS (As leader of the Chorus.)

Now leave behind the joyful path of your singing,
And turn your eyes towards the open doorway!
Sisters, what do I see! Surely the Queen returns
Waking towards us, again, with anxious steps?
What is it, great Queen? What can you have met with,
Within the halls of your house, instead of greetings,
To cause you such trembling? You can hide nothing,
Since I see your reluctance written on your brow,
And amazement competes there with noble anger.

HELEN (Who has left the doors open, in her turmoil.)

A daughter of Zeus is stirred by no common fear,
No lightly passing hand of Terror can touch her:
Only the Horror that the womb of ancient Night,
Raised from chaos, and shaped in its many forms,
In glowing clouds that shoot, upwards and outwards,

From the peak's fiery throat, to shake the hero's breast.
So here today the Stygian gods have marked
The entrance to my house with terror: and gladly
I'd take myself far away, like a guest let go,
Far from this often trodden, long yearned for threshold.
But no! I've retreated here now, into the light,
And you Powers will drive me no further, whoever
You are. Rather, I'll think of some consecration,
So the hearth-fire, cleansed, greets the wife, as the lord.

THE LEADER OF THE CHORUS

Noble lady,
Reveal to your maidservants here,
Who help you reverently, what has happened.

HELEN

You'll see what I saw yourselves, with your own eyes,
If ancient Night has not, straight away, swallowed it,
That shape of hers: withdrawn it to her heart's depths.
But I'll picture it to you in words, so you'll know:
As, with those recent orders in mind, I trod,
Gravely, through the palace's innermost room,
Awed by the silence of the gloomy corridors,
No sound of busy labour greeting my ears,
No sound of prompt, diligent effort meeting my eye,
No Stewardess appeared, and no maidservants,
No courtesy such as usually greets the stranger.
But as I approached closer to the hearth stone
Beside the glowing ashes that remained, I saw
A veiled woman, vast shape, seated on the floor,
Not like one who's asleep, but one deep in thought.
I summoned her to work, with words of command,

Thinking she was the Stewardess whom my husband,
Had placed there perhaps, with foresight, when he left.
But she still sat there, crouched and immovable:
At last, stirred by my threats, she raised her arm,
As if she gestured me away from hearth and hall.
I turned aside from her, angrily, and sped,
To the steps where the Thalamos is adorned
On high, and close beside it the treasure house:
Suddenly that strange shape sprang up from the floor,
Barring my way, imperiously, showing herself,
Tall and haggard, with hollow, blood-coloured gaze:
A shape so weird that mind and eye were troubled.
But I talk to the wind: for words weary themselves
Trying to conjure forms, vainly, like some creator.
See for yourselves! She even dares the daylight!
Here am I mistress, till the King, my lord, shall come.
Phoebus, beauty's friend, drives the horrid spawn of Night
To caverns underground, or he binds them fast.
Phorkyas appears on the threshold, between the doorposts.

CHORUS

Much have I learned, although the locks
Curl youthfully still across my temples!
Many the terrible things I've seen,
The soldiers' misery, Ilium's night,
When it fell.
Through the clouded, and dust-filled turmoil,
The press of warriors, I heard the gods
Calling terribly, heard the ringing
Iron voice of Discord through the field,
City-wards.

Ah! They still stood there, Ilium's
Walls, but the glow of the flames
Soon ran from neighbour to neighbour,
Ever spreading, hither and thither,
With the breath of their storm,
Over the darkening city.
Fleeing, through smoke and heat, I saw
Amid the tongues of soaring fire,
The fearful angry presence of gods,
Marvellous, those striding figures,
Like giants, they were, through the gloom,
The fire-illuminated vapour.
Did I see that Confusion,
Or did the fear-consumed Spirit
Create it? Never will I be able,
To say, but I'm truly certain
Of this, that here I see, Her,
Monstrous shape to my eyes:
My hand could even touch Her,
If terror did not restrain me,
Saving me from danger.
Which of the daughters
Of Phorkyas are you?
Since I liken you
To that family.
Are you perhaps one of the Graeae,
A single eye and a single tooth,
Owned alternately between you,
One born of greyness?
Monster, do you dare

Here, next to Beauty,
Show yourself to Phoebus,
And his knowing gaze?
Then step out before him regardless:
Since he'll not look at what's ugly,
Just as his holy eye,
Has never seen shadow.
Yet we mortals are compelled, ah,
By unfortunate gloomy fate,
To the unspeakably painful sight
She, reprehensible, ever ill fated,
Provokes in the lover of Beauty.
Yet hear me then, if you boldly
Encounter us: hear the curse,
Hear the threat of every abuse,
From the condemnatory mouth of the fortunate,
Whom the gods themselves have created.
PHORKYAS (The transformed Mephistopheles.)
The saying is old, with meaning noble and true,
That Beauty and Shame, together, hand in hand,
Never pursue the same path, over green Earth.
Such ancient, deep-rooted hatred lives in both,
That whenever they meet, by chance, on the way,
The one will always turn her back on her rival.
Then quickly and fiercely each goes on, again,
Shame downcast, but Beauty mocking in spirit,
Till in the end Orcus' dark void shall take her,
If age hasn't, long before then, tamed her pride.
So now I find you, impudent, come from abroad,
With overflowing arrogance, like the cranes,

Their noisily croaking ranks, high overhead,
Their long cloud, sending its creaking tones, down here,
Tempting the quiet traveller to look upwards:
Yet they pursue their way, while he follows his:
And that's the way it will be with us as well.
What then are you, wild Maenads or Bacchantes,
That dare to rage round the great royal palace?
Who are you, then, who howl at this high house's
Stewardess, like a pack of bitches, at the moon?
Do you think it's hidden from me what race you are?
You brood, begotten in battle, raised on slaughter,
Lusting for men, the seducers and the seduced,
Draining the soldiers' and the citizens' powers!
To see your crowd's like watching a vast swarm
Of locusts settle here, darkening the fields.
You the wasters of others labour! Nibbling,
Destroying, the ripening crops of prosperity!
Defeated, bartered, sold in the market, you!

HELEN

Who abuses the servants before the mistress,
Presumptuously usurping a wife's true rights?
Only to her is it given to praise whatever's
Praiseworthy: and to punish what is at fault.
I'm well content, as well, with all the services
They provided to me, when Ilium's great might,
Stood beleaguered, and fell in ruins: none the less
Just as we've endured the wretched wandering
Journey, where often one thinks only of oneself,
So here I expect it now from a happier crew:
A lord asks how slaves serve, not what they are.

So be silent, then, and no longer jeer at them.
If you've guarded the king's house well until now,
In place of the mistress, such is to your credit:
But now that she comes herself, you should draw back,
Lest you find punishment instead of fair reward.

PHORKYAS

Disciplining servants is a prerogative
That the noble wife of a king, loved by the gods,
Has duly earned by years of wise discretion.
Since you, acknowledged, take up your former place
Once more, as Queen, and mistress of the house,
Resume the slackened reins again, and rule here,
Hold the treasure in your keeping, and us with it.
But first of all defend me, who am the elder,
Against this crowd, who if they are compared
To your swanlike beauty, are only cackling geese.

THE LEADER OF THE CHORUS

How ugly ugliness looks,
Next to beauty.

PHORKYAS

How stupid the lack of reason, next to sense.
From here on the Chorus answer in turn, stepping forward one by one.

FIRST MEMBER OF THE CHORUS

Tell us of Father Erebus:
Tell us of Mother Night.

PHORKYAS

Speak about Scylla, sweet sister of your race.

SECOND MEMBER OF THE CHORUS

There are plenty of monsters
In your family tree.

PHORKYAS

Go down to Orcus, look for your tribe down there!

THIRD MEMBER OF THE CHORUS

Those who are down there

Are far too young for you.

PHORKYAS

Try your arts of seduction on old Tiresias.

FOURTH MEMBER OF THE CHORUS

Orion's nurse

Was your great great-grandchild.

PHORKYAS

I suspect that the Harpies raised you all, on filth.

FIFTH MEMBER OF THE CHORUS

What do you feed

Your perfect leanness on?

PHORKYAS

Not on the blood that you all lust so much for.

SIXTH MEMBER OF THE CHORUS

You hunger for corpses,

You, foul corpse yourself!

PHORKYAS

Vampire's teeth gleam there, in your shameless muzzle.

THE LEADER OF THE CHORUS

It would shut yours tight,

If I called out who you are.

PHORKYAS

Well say your own name first: that'll solve the riddle.

HELEN

I intervene, not in anger but in sorrow,

To forbid this alternating discord!

A ruler meets with nothing that's more harmful
Than private disputes of his quarrelling servants.
Then his firm orders are no longer answered
With swiftly answering and harmonious action,
Instead, wilful commotion roars around him:
Self-composure lost, he abuses them in vain.
Not only that. Unacceptably, in anger,
You've summoned the wretched shapes of dreadful forms,
They surround me, so I feel I'm being whirled
To Orcus, from these familiar paternal fields.
Am I remembering? Did delusion grip me?
Was I all of that? Am I, now? And shall be still,
Symbol of dream and fear, to those who waste cities?
The maidservants shudder, but you, the eldest,
Stand there calmly: speak words of reason to me!

PHORKYAS

The favour of the gods seems only a dream
To one who recalls the troubles of long ages.
But you, blessed, beyond all aim and measure,
Quickly inflamed to every sort of daring risk,
Only found fires of love, in the realm of life,
Theseus, driven by lust, abducted you, a child,
He strong as Hercules: a man nobly formed.

HELEN

He carried me off, a slender ten-year old fawn,
And caged me in Aphidnus' tower in Attica.

PHORKYAS

But soon freed, by the hands of Castor and Pollux,
A crowd of suitors, the heroes, swarmed round you.

HELEN

Yet, I freely confess, above all, Patroclus
The image of Achilles, had my secret favour,
PHORKYAS

But your father's will bound you to Menelaus,
The brave sea rover, the defender of his house.
HELEN

He gave him his daughter, and command of the state.
Hermione came from our married existence.
PHORKYAS

But while he disputed his right to far off Crete,
To you, the lonely, came all too handsome a guest.
HELEN

Why do you recall that semi-widowhood,
And all the terrible ruin it caused around me?
PHORKYAS

To me, a free-born Cretan, his same journey
Brought captivity and years of slavery.
HELEN

He ordered you here at once, as Stewardess,
Entrusting the fortress and his treasure to you.
PHORKYAS

Which you abandoned, for Ilium's high city,
And the inexhaustible delights of love.
HELEN

Not delights, be sure! All too bitter a sorrow
Was poured endlessly over my head and breast.
PHORKYAS

Yet they say that you appeared in dual form,
Seen in Troy and, at the same time, in Egypt.
HELEN

Don't confuse my clouded, wandering mind completely.
To this moment, I don't know which of them I am.

PHORKYAS

Then they say: Achilles became your companion,
Came, burning, from the empty realm of shadows!
He'd loved you before, opposing fate's command.

HELEN

As phantom, I bound myself to a phantom.
It was a dream, as the tales themselves tell.
I fade, now, become a phantom to myself.
(She sinks into the arms of the Chorus.)

CHORUS

Silence! Silence!
False-seeing one, false-speaking one, you!
Out of the terrible single-toothed
Mouth, what might be breathed, so,
Out of so frightful a throat of horror!
Now the malevolent, seemingly benevolent,
Wolf's anger under the woolly fleece,
Is more terrible to me than the jaws
Of the three-headed dog.
We stand here anxiously listening:
When? How? Where, will such malice
Break out now
From this predatory monster?
Now rather than friendly words, richly laced
With trust, waters of Lethe, sweet and mild,
You stir up all from the past,
The evil more than the good,
And instantly darken

The gleam of the present
And also the future's
Sweetly glimmering, hopeful dawn.
Silence! Silence!
So the Queen's spirit, now,
Almost ready to leave her,
Can still hold, and uphold
This, the form of all forms
On which the sun ever lighted.
Helen has recovered, and stands in the centre again.

PHORKYAS

Shining out from fleeting vapours,
Comes the sunlight of our day, here,
That when veiled could so delight us,
But in splendour only blinds us.
As the world is open to you,
When you show your lovely face, now,
Though they scorn me so as ugly,
Still I know the beautiful.

HELEN

I step, trembling, from the abyss that,
In fainting, closed around me,
And would gladly rest my body,
Tired and weary are my limbs:
But it's proper for a Queen,
Then, as it is for all about her,
To be calm, and courageous,
Whatever harm shall threaten.

PHORKYAS

In your Majesty, and Beauty, standing here, now, before us,

Your look says it commands us. What do you command? Speak out.

HELEN

Prepare yourselves to atone for what your quarrel has neglected:

Hurry with your sacrifice, now, as the king himself commanded.

PHORKYAS

All is ready in the palace, bowls, and tripods,

Sharpened axe-blade,

For the sprinkling, incense burning:

Show me now the ready victim!

HELEN

That the king has failed to tell me.

PHORKYAS

He said nothing? Words of woe!

HELEN

What's this woe that overcomes you?

PHORKYA

Queen, it means you must be slaughtered!

HELEN

I?

PHORKYAS

And them.

CHORUS

Oh, pain and suffering!

PHORKYAS

You will fall beneath the axe.

HELEN

Presaged, though still dreadful: I, alas!

PHORKYAS

There's no escaping.

CHORUS

Oh! And us? What happens to us?

PHORKYAS

She will die a noble death, then:

But you'll hang in rows together, struggling, all along the rafters

Holding up the gabled roof there, as bird-catchers dangle thrushes.

Helena and the Chorus stand stunned and alarmed, in striking composed groups.

Phantoms! – Frozen images, you stand, parted

From that light you can't belong to, in your terror.

Men, and the tribe of phantoms you resemble,

Will never willingly forgo the sunlight:

But none are saved from their fate, or can defer it.

All know it's true, but only a few accept it.

Enough, you're lost! Now, quickly: start the work.

(She claps her hands: muffled dwarfish forms appear in the doorway, and quickly carry out her orders).

This way, you spheres, shadowy rounded forms!

Roll over here: and do what harm you wish.

Set up the gold-horned altar that you carry,

Let the gleaming axe lie there on the silver rim,

Fill the urns with water to wash away

All the hideous stains of darkened blood.

Spread the rich carpets out, here, over the dust,

So the sacrifice can kneel in royal manner,

And be wrapped around, once the head is severed,

And buried decently there, and with due honour.

THE LEADER OF THE CHORUS

The Queen stands here

Beside us deep in thought,

The maidservants wither away like mown grass:

I think that I, as the eldest, am bound, in sacred duty,
To barter words with you, the eldest of all by far.
You're wise, experienced, and seem well-disposed,
And though this foolish crowd baited you in error,
Speak of a way to escape this fate, if you know it.

PHORKYAS

That's easily done: it depends on the Queen alone,
To save herself, and you her followers with her.
But decision is required, and of the swiftest.

CHORUS

Most honoured of Fates, wisest of Sibyls, you,
Hold the gold shears apart: bring both aid and light:
Already, we feel ourselves swinging, struggling,
Fearful, for our limbs would rather be dancing,
And afterwards rest, soft, on our lovers' breast.

HELEN

Let them be afraid! I feel pain but no terror:
Yet if rescue's possible, I gladly accept.
To the wise, far-seeing mind, the impossible
Is often revealed as possible. Speak: say on!

CHORUS

Speak, and tell us, tell us quickly:
How we might escape the terror,
Dreadful nooses that still threaten, like some kind of evil necklace
Wound around our tender necks? Already we, oh, wretched creatures,
Feel the choking, suffocating, if you, Rhea, the great mother
Of the gods, won't show us mercy.

PHORKYAS

Have you the patience to listen, to long winded
Speeches, in silence? The history's endless.

CHORUS

Patience enough! While we're listening, we're alive.

PHORKYAS

He who stays at home to guard his noble wealth

And secures the high walls of his lofty dwelling,

And maintains his roof against the driving rain,

Will prosper in all the days of his long life:

But whoever, in guilt, crosses the square-cut stones

Of the sacred threshold, swiftly, with fleeing steps,

Will, indeed find the ancient place, on their return,

But altered in every way, if not overthrown.

HELEN

Why recount these familiar sayings here?

If you'd relate things: don't provoke annoyance.

PHORKYAS

It's simple fact, in no way a criticism.

Menelaus sailed from bay to bay, looting,

Skirted the coast and islands, aggressively,

Returned with the spoils that are rusting there.

Then he spent ten long years there in front of Troy:

And I don't know how many more, on the way home.

And how are things now with this place where we stand,

Tyndareus' noble house, and the region round?

HELEN

Do you embrace all scorn so completely

You can only open your mouth to criticise?

PHORKYAS

The vales were neglected for so many years,

Those that rise behind Sparta, to the northward,

Beyond Taygetus, from where, a living stream,

Eurotas, pours downward, then along our valley,
Flows by our broad reed-beds, to feed your swans.
Up there, in the mountain vales, a bold race settled,
Pushing southward from Cimmerian darkness,
And then built an inaccessible fortress there,
From which, at will, they harass land and people.

HELEN

Have they achieved all that? It seems unlikely.

PHORKYAS

They've had time, perhaps twenty years in all.

HELENA

Is there a leader? Are they a band of robbers?

PHORKYAS

Not robbers, but one of them acts as leader.

I don't curse him, though he attacked me too.

He might have taken all, but was satisfied

With gifts, not tribute, as he called them.

HELEN

How did he look?

PHORKYAS

Less than evil! He pleased me well.

He's vigorous, daring, and sophisticated,

An intelligent man: as few among the Greeks.

They call his race Barbarians, but I'm doubtful

If they are any crueller than those heroes

Who proved such devourers of men, before Troy.

I respected his greatness, and confided in him.

His fortress! You should see with your own eyes!

It's a great deal more than the clumsy masonry

Your father rolled together, higgledy-piggledy,

Cyclopean as a Cyclops, piling raw stone,
Over raw stone: there, instead there, it's all
Plumb line and balance: it's laid out by rule.
Look from outside! It rises straight to the sky,
So firm, tightly jointed – smooth as a steel mirror
To climb – that even your thoughts slide off!
And, inside, great courts with plenty of room,
Ringed by buildings, of every use and nature.
There you'll see pillars, columns, arches, quoins,
Balconies, galleries, facing inwards and outwards,
And coats of arms.

CHORUS

What arms are those?

PHORKYAS

Ajax carried

A writhing snake on his shield: you yourself saw it.
The Seven against Thebes also bore their symbols
On each of their shields, replete with meaning.
There you saw moons, and stars in the night sky,
Heroes and Goddesses, torches, ladders, swords,
And whatever fierce weapons threaten fine cities.
Our heroic band carries such images too,
In bright colours, bestowed by our ancestors.
There you see lions, eagles with beaks and claws,
Horns of oxen, wings, roses, and peacocks' tails,
Bands too made of gold, black, silver, blue and red.
The like of these hang in their halls, row on row.
In spacious halls, as wide as the whole wide world:
You could dance there!

CHORUS

Say then, are there dancers, there?

PHORKYAS

The best! A lively crowd of golden-haired youths.

The fragrance of youth! Paris was fragrant, thus,

When he grew close to the Queen.

HELEN

You mistake your role

Completely: now speak your closing lines to me!

PHORKYAS

No, you speak the last! Grave, and distinct say: Yes!

And I'll surround you with that fortress.

CHORUS

O, speak

That one short word, and save both yourself, and us!

HELEN

What? Do I fear King Menelaus would commit

Such a cruel offence as to make me kill myself?

PHORKYAS

Have you forgotten how he wreaked mutilation,

Unheard-of, on Deiphobus, dead Paris' brother,

Because he stubbornly claimed you, the widow,

And prized you? He cropped both nose and ears,

And disfigured him, there: It was terrible to see.

HELEN

Yes he did that, and he did it for my sake.

PHORKYAS

Because of it, now, he'll do the same to you.

Beauty is indivisible: he who owns it

Destroys it, rather than share a part of it.

Trumpets sound in the distance: the Chorus starts in terror.

As a trumpet call pierces the ear to grip
And tear the innards: Jealousy drives her claws
Into the breast of him who can never forget
What once he had, and lost, and no longer has.

CHORUS

Don't you hear the trumpets calling?
Don't you see the flash of swords?

PHORKYAS

King and master, now be welcome,
Gladly I'll offer my account.

CHORUS

But, what of us?

PHORKYAS

In truth, you know that her death's before your eyes,
Find your own death there within them:
There's no hope left for you.

(A Pause).

HELEN

I ponder this simple thing that I might try.
You are a hostile daemon: I feel it deeply,
I'm fearful you'll still make evil out of good.
But then, I'll follow you to that fortress, there:
I know the rest: but what the Queen might conceal
Concerning it, mysteriously, in her heart,
Be unknown to all. Now, old one, lead the way!

CHORUS

O, how gladly we're going,
On hurrying feet:
Death is behind:
Before us again,

Towering fortress
Inaccessible walls.
Though they guard us as well
As Ilium's citadel,
Still in the end, it
Fell, through the basest of ruses.

(Mists rise and spread, obscuring the background, and the nearer part of the scene, at will).

What is this? How?
Sisters, look round!
Wasn't it loveliest day?
Strips of vapour hover about,
Rise from Eurotas' holy stream:
Already the loveliest
Reed-wreathed shore has vanished from sight:
And the proud, free, graceful
Gentle glide of the swans
Swimming in sociable joy,
I alas see, no more!
Yet still, still
I hear them calling,
In hoarse tones, calling afar!
Proclaiming death, they are speaking.
Ah, that to us they may not,
Instead of salvation promised,
Proclaim our ruin, at last:
To us, the swanlike, long,
Lovely, white-throated, and ah!
Our Queen born of the swan.
Woe to us, woe!

All's hidden already
Vapour's swirling around.
Now we can't see one another!
What's happening? Are we moving?
We're hovering with
Straggling steps along the ground?
Can't you see? Isn't that Hermes
Soaring ahead? Doesn't his gold wand gleam,
Beckoning us, ordering us back again
To the wholly joyless, and greyly-twilit,
Intangible, phantom-filled,
Overcrowded, ever-empty Hades?
Yes, at once, now, all is darkening,
Dully all the vapours vanish,
Grey with gloom, and brown as walls.
Walls appearing to our vision,
Blank now to our clearer vision.
A court now is it? Or a deep pit?
Fearful, though, in either case, now!
Sisters, oh! We are imprisoned,
Captives, as we've never been.

PART II ACT III SCENE II: THE INNER COURT OF THE CASTLE

Surrounded with richly ornamented buildings of the Middle Ages.

THE LEADER OF THE CHORUS

Hasty and foolish,

And typical of womankind!

They hang on the moment, sport of every breeze,

Of every chance and mischance, never knowing
How to suffer either calmly! One's always certain,
Fiercely, to contradict the others, others her:
Only, they laugh or cry alike, in joy or pain.
Now, hush! And listen to what our high-minded
Mistress may decide, here, for herself and us.

HELEN

Pythoness, where are you? However you're named:
Come out from the arches of this dark fortress.
If you come from the wondrous lord and hero
To announce me, and ready a fit reception,
Accept my thanks, and lead me there quickly:
I wish my wanderings ended. I want to rest.

THE LEADER OF THE CHORUS

Queen, in vain,
You look about in all directions:
That wretched shape has vanished, stayed perhaps
There in the vapour, out of whose depths we came,
I cannot tell how, so swiftly, without a footfall.
Perhaps she wanders lost in the vast labyrinth
Of these many castles wondrously merged in one.
Seeking high and princely greeting from her lord.
But see! There a crowd moves about in readiness.
Along galleries, at windows, through the doors
Come a crowd of servants, scurrying to and fro:
It proclaims a noblest welcome for the guest.

CHORUS

My heart is eased! O, see over there,
How a company of handsome youths approach
With lingering step, in dignified order,

Marching in ranks. Who gave out the command
To marshal them, and so quickly arranged
All this youthful team of so handsome a race?
What shall I admire most? Is it the graceful step,
Or the curls of hair on the palest of brows,
Or the rounded cheeks with a peach's blushes,
And like it also, in their silkiest down?
I'd gladly bite, yet I'm frightened to try it:
Since in a similar case, and I shudder to say it,
The mouth was as suddenly filled, with ashes!
But the handsomest
Come to us now:
What do they carry?
Steps for the throne,
Carpets and seat,
Curtain, canopy,
Jewelled finery:
Waving above us,
Forming a garland,
Over the head of our Queen:
For she, already, invited
Ascends, to the noble seat.
Forward now,
Step by step,
Solemnly ranked.
Worthy, O worthy, triply worthy,
Let such a reception be blessed!

What the Chorus has described takes place. After the boys and squires have descended in long procession, Faust appears above, at the top of the staircase, in the costume of a knight of the Middle Ages, and then descends

slowly and with dignity.

THE LEADER OF THE CHORUS (Observing him closely.)

If indeed the gods have not, as they often do,
Only lent this man brave form, for an instant,
Exalted his dignity, and charming presence,
As a temporary act, then whatever he does
He'll succeed, whether it's warring with men,
Or in the lesser struggles with lovely ladies.

Truly I prefer him to hosts of others,
Whom my eyes have seen, the highly praised.

I see the Prince approach, with slow solemn step,
Restrained by reverence: Queen, turn towards him!

FAUST (Approaching: a man in chains at his side.)

Instead of the usual calm greeting
Instead of a reverential welcome,
Here I bring a wretch bound fast with chains,
Who failed so in his duty, I failed mine.

Kneel here, so this noble lady
May hear a prompt confession of your guilt.

This, royal Mistress, is the man selected
Because of his keen vision to gaze about
From the high tower, and to look keenly
At heaven's spaces, and the breadth of earth,
To report whatever moves here or there,
From the encircling hills, to the castle,
Whether a transit of the woolly flocks,
Or soldiers: so we can protect the first,
Attack the others. Today, negligence!

You came here: he had nothing to report:
We failed in the reception you deserved,

In honour of the guest. Now he forfeits
His guilty life, and would have shed his blood
In a merited death: but only you alone
Shall pardon him or punish, as you wish.

HELEN

Such great power you choose to grant me,
As judge, as Mistress too, though, I suspect
You intend it as a kind of test –
Yet, I'll employ a judge's first duty,
To give the accused a hearing. Speak out.

LYNCEUS, THE WARDEN OF THE TOWER

Let me kneel,
And let me see her,
Let me live, or let me die,
Already I'm devoted to her
Heavenly lady from on high.
Waiting for the dawn's advances,
Gazing at her eastern house,
Suddenly the sunlight dances,
Marvellously in the south!
Drawn to see the marvel closer,
Instead of the ravine and height,
Instead of earth and heaven there,
I gazed at her, the sole delight.
I was granted powers of vision
Like the lynx, high in the tree:
But now I peered in indecision
As in a dark and clouded dream.
How think? Even if I'd so wished?
Wall, and tower? Bolted gate?

Mist, it rose, and cleared the mist,
Came the Goddess here in state!
I surrendered heart and eye
Drinking in the gentle light:
How that beauty blinds, and I
Was blinded wholly by the sight.
I forgot the watchman's duty,
And the promised trumpet call:
Threaten then, now, to destroy me –
Anger lies in Beauty's thrall.

HELEN

I cannot punish this evil that I brought here,
With me. Ah me! What a fierce fate it is
Pursues me, so that everywhere I possess
The hearts of men, and that they neither spare
Themselves nor anything else of worth.
They steal, seduce, fight: rushing to and fro,
Demigods, heroes, gods, even daemons
Led me in my wanderings, here and there.
Alone I've confused the world, doubly so:
Now I bring threefold, fourfold woe on woe.
Take this innocent away: let him go.
It's no shame to be deceived by the gods.

FAUST

O Queen, amazed, I see them both together:
The certain archer, and the stricken prey:
I see the bow, from which the shaft was loosed,
That wounded him. Arrow after arrow,
Now strikes me. Imagining the feathered whirr
Of arrows crossing every court and hall.

What am I now? My walls you make unsafe
My most faithful servants, you make rebels,
Already I fear my army too obeys
A victorious and unconquered lady.
What's left to do but add myself as well,
And all that I have vainly imagined mine?
Freely and loyally, before your feet,
Let me acknowledge you as Mistress,
Whose presence wins you throne and ownership.
LYNCEUS (Carrying a chest, with men bringing others.)
Queen, once more I advance!
The rich man begs a glance,
He sees you and at a glimpse,
He's a beggar, and a prince.
What am I now? What was I once?
What's to be willed? What's to be done?
What use the eye's clearest sight!
It glances from your royal might.
From the Eastwards we pressed on,
And suddenly the West were gone.
So wide and long the people massed,
The first knew nothing of the last.
The first rank fell: the next stood fast,
The third ranks' lances unsurpassed:
Each man was like a hundredfold,
Thousands died there, all untold.
We pressed forwards: we stormed on,
We were masters, then were gone:
And where I ruled as chief today,
Tomorrow robbed, and stole away.

We looked – and rapid was that look:
The loveliest women there we took,
We took the oxen from the stall,
We took the horses, took them all.
But my delight was to discover
The rarest things I could uncover:
And what other men might grasp,
To me was only withered grass.
I was on the trail of treasure,
Whatever my sharp eye could measure,
In every pocket I could see,
Every chest was glass to me.
Heaps of gold, they were mine,
And the noblest gems I'd find:
Yet now the emeralds alone
Are worthy to adorn your throne.
Sway there now 'twixt ear and lip,
You pearly spheres from oceans deep:
A place the rubies dare not seek,
So pale beside your rosy cheek.
And so the riches, every prize,
I set down here before your eyes:
Before your feet I gladly yield,
The spoils of many a bloody field.
As many chests as I've brought you,
I've many iron caskets too:
Let me follow your path still
And your treasure chambers fill.
You'd scarcely mounted to the throne,
When all bowed down, to you alone,

Wisdom, riches, worldly power,
Before your grace, that very hour.
I held it all fast: that is true
But now it's loosed, and all for you.
I thought its worth was plain to see,
But now it's nothing much, to me.
Everything I've owned will pass
From me like mown and withered grass.
O, give me just one brightening glance,
And all the value's in its dance!

FAUST

Quickly, remove the heap that boldness won,
And take no blame for it, but seek no praise.
All is hers already, that the castle
Hides in its lap: you offer these few things
In vain. Go and pile treasure on treasure,
In due order. Present a fine array
Of unseen splendours! Let the vaulted halls
Gleam like the clearest sky, let Paradise
Be created from their dead existence.
Quickly let flowery carpet on carpet
Be unrolled beneath her foot: she'll step
On softest ground: and let her noble gaze,
Blinding all but the Gods, fall on splendour.

LYNCEUS

What the lord commands is nothing,
For the servants, a mere plaything:
This exalted beauty rules
Over blood and treasure too.
The whole army now is tamed,

All the swords are blunt again,
Near this form of noble gold,
The sun itself is pale and cold,
Near the riches of her face
All is but an empty space.

HELEN (To Faust.)

I wish to speak to you, come here then
Beside me! For the empty place invites
Its lord, and so secures this place for me.

FAUST

First, let my loyal dedication please you,
While I kneel, noble lady: let me kiss
The gracious hand that lifts me to your side.
Confirm me as co-regent of a realm
Of unknown borders, win now for yourself
Protector, slave, worshipper all in one!

HELEN

So many wonders do I see, and hear
Amazement grips me, there's much I would know.
But teach me why that man spoke aloud
With curious speech, familiar but strange.
Each sound seeming to give way to the next,
And when a word gave pleasure to the ear,
Another came, as if to caress the first.

FAUST

If my people's speech already pleases you,
O, you'll be delighted with our singing:
It completely satisfies the heart and mind.
But to be sure of it, we'll practise too:
Alternate speech entices, calls it, forth.

HELEN

You'll tell me how to speak with lovely art?

FAUST

It's easy, it must pour forth from the heart.

And if the breast then overflows with yearning,

One looks around and asks –

HELEN

- who else is burning.

FAUST

Not backwards, forwards is the spirit's sight,

This moment now, alone, –

HELEN

- is our delight.

FAUST

She's treasure and commitment, wealth and land:

What confirmation does she give –

HELEN

– my hand.

CHORUS

Who's offended that our Princess

Grants the master of the castle

A show of friendliness?

Let's confess, that we're as fully

Prisoners, as we've been till now

Since the shameful overthrow

Of Ilium, and the anxious,

Sad, and labyrinthine voyage.

Women, used to men's desires,

Are not particular,

They are proficient.

And they award an equal right
To shepherds with their golden hair,
Dark, fauns perhaps, bristling there,
As opportunity affords,
To bodies in their vigour.
Already they sit closer, closer,
Drawn towards each other,
Shoulder to shoulder, knee to knee,
Hand in hand they sway
Across the thrones'
Soft cushioned, majesty.
Their private raptures
Revealed so boldly
To the eyes of the people.

HELEN

I feel so far away and yet so near,
And gladly say now: 'Here, I am! Here!'

FAUST

I scarcely breathe, I tremble, speech is dead:
This is a dream: time and place have fled.

HELEN

I seem exhausted, yet created new,
Enmeshed with you, the unknown and the true.

FAUST

Don't seek to analyse so rare a fate!
Our duty is to live: though but a day.

PHORKYAS (Entering suddenly.)

Spell the letters in love's primer,
Only loving, pass your time here,
Passing, let love be sublime here,

But the moment isn't right.
Don't you feel it, this dark presage?
Don't you hear the trumpet's message?
Your destruction is in sight.
Menelaus with his army
Is advancing on you quickly,
Arm yourself, for bitter fight!
Overwhelmed by the winners,
And defiled, like Deiphobus,
You'll all pay, for this delight.
First the lighter vessels shatter,
Then, for this one, at the altar,
The newly sharpened axe shines bright.

FAUST

Rash disturbance! Insistent, she comes pushing in here:
Senseless haste is wrong, even where there's danger.
Unlucky news makes the fairest messenger ugly:
You, ugliest of all, bring only bad news gladly.
But you'll not succeed for once: disturb the air
With your empty breath. There's no danger looming here,
Your danger's only an idle threat to me.

(Calls, and explosions from the towers, trumpets and cornets, martial music. A powerful army marches past).

No! Now you'll see the heroes gather,
The whole wide land will here unite:
He deserves the ladies' favour,
Who, in their defence, shall fight.

(To the leaders, who step forward from the ranks, and advance.)

Rage silently, and do your duty,
Then you'll achieve the victory,

You, the prime of northern beauty,
You, the flower of the east.
Cased in steel, with steel gleaming,
The army shatters realms at will,
They appear: the earth is shaking,
They advance, it echoes still.
At Pylos, once, we came to shore,
Old Nestor is no longer living,
Our independent army saw
Us shatter all the mighty kings.
From these walls, in an instant,
Send Menelaus back to sea:
There robbing, killing, is his errand,
As is his wish and destiny.
Dukes, I greet you every one,
Commanded by the Spartan Queen:
At her feet lay vale and mountain,
Win the kingdoms in between.
Germans, with your walls and towers,
Defend Corinth and her bays!
Then Achaia's hundred gorges
I'll trust to you, the Goths, always.
Let the Franks advance on Elis,
Messene, to the Saxons brave,
Normans, hold the Argolis,
Rule the shore: and rule the wave.
When everyone has his own land,
At foreign foes, let force be aimed,
While Sparta holds the high command
Our Queen's ancestral domain.

She'll behold you each, delighting
In lands, possessed of every right:
And at her feet you'll seek her blessing,
Acknowledgement, and law and light.

(Faust descends from the throne: the Princes form a circle round him to receive individual commands and instructions).

CHORUS

Who wants the loveliest for himself,
First, above everything,
Would be wise to have weapons about him:
He might well gain by flattery
Whoever is noblest on Earth:
But he won't possess her in peace:
The sly, and insidious tempt her from him,
Robbers will boldly steal her from him:
He must prepare to foil them.
So I praise our Prince the while,
And think him nobler than the rest,
Since he combines wisdom and strength,
So that the powerful show obedience,
Waiting his every command.
They follow his orders faithfully,
Each as much for his own profit
As for the ruler's reward and thanks,
Winning the highest fame for both.
Who now will drag her away
From the powerful possessor?
She belongs to him: let her be his,
Doubly bestowed by us, so she
And he, are surrounded inside by thick walls,

Outside, by the greatest of armies.

FAUST

The gifts that, on those here, I bestow –

To each of them a prosperous land –

Are great and glorious, let them go!

We in the middle take our stand.

In their rivalry they'll protect you

Half-island ringed by leaping waves,

While these slender hills connect you

To Europe's last great mountain range.

This land, that outshines every land,

Be blessed for every race forever,

Delivered to my Queen's command,

That, long ago now, wondered at her,

There, by Eurotas' whispering light,

She broke radiant from the shell,

That brightness dazzling the sight

Of siblings: Leda's eyes, as well.

This land now turns to you alone,

Offering you its noblest flower:

Oh, though the whole world is your own,

Let your country hold you in its power!

And though you may endure the sun's cold arrow

Up there, on the mountain's jagged height,

See, how the rocky hillside's green below, now,

Where the goat may crop its meagre right.

The sources leap, all streams rush down as one,

Gorge, slope, and meadow are already green.

On a hundred hills, rock-folded, steep and broken,

The scattered woolly flocks are clearly seen.

Spread all around, with cautious measured stride,
The horned cattle tread the dizzy edge:
But here there's shelter that the caves provide,
Hundreds to hide them all, on the rocky ledge.
Pan guards them too: and lively nymphs live there,
In the damp fresh space of bushy clefts,
And, yearning upward to the higher air,
The crowded tree its slender branches lifts.
Primeval woods! The mighty oaks their cap:
Whose stubborn boughs stick out from them, in state:
While kindly maples, pregnant with sweet sap,
Soar cleanly upward, toying with the weight.
Pure mother's milk, in that still realm of shadows,
Flows rich, in readiness for lamb and child:
Fruit's not lacking, gift of fertile meadows,
And from the hollow trunk drips honey mild.
Here well-being's granted all the race,
Cheek and lips both to joy consent,
Each one is immortal, in their place:
And all there are healthy and content.
And thus the lovely child, of purest days,
Grows, and achieves his father's strength.
We're amazed, the question's still, always:
Are these gods, or are they truly men?
A shepherd's form,
The fairest of them was like the sun:
Since, where pure Nature is the norm,
Then all the worlds must move as one.
(Taking his seat beside her.)
So, this have you, and this have I achieved:

Let the past fade behind us: it is gone!
Oh, know yourself from highest gods conceived,
To the first world, alone then, you belong.
No solid fortresses shall ring you round!
In eternal youth, stands as it stood –
So our stay with all delight be crowned –
Arcadia in Sparta's neighbourhood.
Lured here to tread this blessed ground,
You fled towards a happy destiny!
Let our thrones as arbours now be found,
Our joy be Arcadian, and free!

The scene is completely transformed. Bowers are built against a range of rocky caverns. A shadowy grove runs to the foot of the rocks that rise on all sides. Faust and Helen are not visible: the Chorus lie scattered about in sleep.

PHORKYAS

I'm not sure how long these women have been sleeping:
Nor do I know whether they allowed themselves
To dream what I saw clearly with my own eyes.
Therefore I'll wake them. The young will be amazed,
You bearded ones, too, who sit waiting there, below,
To understand the meaning of these wonders.
Wake! Wake, and shake the dew from your hair,
The slumber from your eyes! Don't blink so, but hear me!

CHORUS

Tell us, quickly, quickly, all the wonders that have happened!
If we can't believe them, we'll enjoy them with more pleasure.
For we're wholly weary sitting, staring at these empty stones.

PHORKYAS

You've hardly rubbed your eyes,
Yet you're already weary, children?

Well, listen: in these caverns, in these grottos, in these arbours,
Shade and shelter have been granted, to the two idyllic lovers,
Our Master and our Mistress.

CHORUS

What, within there?

PHORKYAS

Sweetly sundered,
From the world, alone they summoned me to grant them quiet service.
At their side I stood there, honoured,
Yet still, as one who's trusted,
Always gazed at something other, turning here and there at random.
Looked for roots and bark and mosses, being skilled in all the potions,
And so they were left alone.

CHORUS

You speak as if a whole world's space
Were hidden there inside, now,
Woods and fields and lakes and rivers: what a fantasy you spin!

PHORKYAS

It's true: you're inexperienced, and its depths are unexplored!
I felt, lost in contemplation, hall on hall there, court on court.
In an instant laughter echoes, through the cavernous recesses:
There I see a boy is springing, from his mother to his father,
From his father to his mother, all is dandling and caressing,
And a foolish, a fond teasing, shouts of play, and cries of joy,
Alternate, there, and I'm deaf.
A naked wingless Spirit, like a faun, and yet no creature,
Leaps across the solid floor, and the ground beneath responding,
Sends him flying through the ether, till the second leap or so, there,
He can touch the cavern roof.
Anxiously his mother's calling: 'Leap as often as you like, dear,

But all flying is forbidden, so beware of taking flight.’
And his loyal father warns him: ‘In the earth’s the power of swiftness,
That will quickly send you flying:
Touch the ground then with your toe,
And like that son of Earth’s, Antaeus, you’ll soon find strength again.’
So he leaps the rocky masses of the cavern, from a cornice,
To another and around then, as a ball does when it’s thrown.
But suddenly he’s vanished in a crevice of the cavern,
And it seems he’s lost.
His mother grieves for him, father comforts,
I stand there, wondering anxiously, but there again’s the vision!
Do buried treasures lie there? Robes embroidered all with flowers,
He has fittingly assumed.
Tassels tremble from his shoulders, ribbons flutter round his chest,
In his hand a golden lyre, like a miniature Apollo,
He steps happily to the overhanging brink: amazing.
And the parents in delight clasp each other to their hearts,
What’s that shining round his temples? It’s hard to see what’s gleaming,
Is it gold and gems, or flames, now, of the spirit’s supreme power?
So he moves as if the stately boy’s proclaimed to us already
The future Lord of Beauty, in whose members the eternal
Melodies are stirring: and so you too will also hear him,
And you too will also see him, with the rarest show of wonder.

CHORUS

Do you call this a marvel,
Crete has begotten?
Can you never have listened
To what Poetry teaches?
Have you never once heard Ionia’s,
Have you never listened to Hellas’

Most ancient of legends
Of the gods and heroes?
All things that happen
In this present age,
Are mournful echoes
Of our ancestors' nobler times:
And your story can't equal
That, loveliest of lies,
Easier to believe than Truth,
That they sang of Maia's son.
That delicate and strong, yet
Scarcely born, suckling child,
Would you swaddle him in purest down,
Clothe him in costly jewelled bindings,
The crowd of chattering nurses'
Utterly senseless notion.
But strong and yet delicate,
Already the supple rascal,
Draws forth his lithe body,
Leaves behind that royal,
But timid, constraining shell,
Silent, there, in its place:
Like the finished butterfly,
From the chilly chrysalis,
Slipping, with quick unfolding wings,
Boldly into the sunlit air,
And courageously fluttering.
So did he, the liveliest,
And he quickly demonstrated
By the most skilful arts,

That he'd always be the patron
Daemon of thieves and jesters
And all seekers of profit.
From the Sea God he quickly stole
His trident, and from Ares himself,
Slyly, his sword from its scabbard:
Bow and arrows from Phoebus too,
And tongs from Hephaestus:
He even stole Father Zeus'
Lightning bolts, not scared of fire:
Then he tripped poor Eros up,
In the toils of a wrestling match:
As Venus kissed him, too, stole away,
The ribbons from her breasts.

(A pure melodious and exquisite music echoes from the cave. All listen and appear deeply moved. There is a full musical accompaniment from this point to the designated pause.)

PHORKYAS

Hear the loveliest of music,
Free from old mythology!
All your gods and all their antics,
Let them go, they're history.
None can understand you more,
We demand a higher art:
From the heart itself must pour,
What will influence the heart.
(She retires towards the rocks.)
Be you stirred, you awesome being,
By the sweet and flattering sound,
We, renewed to life, are feeling,

Moved to tears of joy, around.

Let the sun be lost from heaven

So it's daylight in the soul,

We'll discover in the heart, then,

What the Earth fails to hold.

(Helen. Faust. Euphorion, in costume as previously described).

EUPHORION

Hear the song of childhood sung now,

Its delight belongs to you,

See me leap about in time, now

Let my parents' hearts leap too.

HELEN

It requires two noble hearts

For Love to bless humanity,

But to be a thing apart

They must make a precious three.

FAUST

All we sought is now discovered:

I am yours, and you are mine:

And we two are bound together,

There's no better fate to find.

CHORUS

They'll delight for many years

In this child's tender glow,

Ah, this partnership of peers,

How it's beauty moves me, so!

EUPHORION

Now let me leap, oh,

Now let me spring!

High in the air, go

Circling all things,
That's the desire
That's driving me on.

FAUST

Yet, gently! Gently!
Not into danger,
Lest a chance downfall,
Awaits the ranger,
Straight away grounds you,
Our darling son!

EUPHORION

I can't stick fast to
The ground any more:
Let go my hands and
Let go my hair,
Let go my clothes!
They are all mine.

HELEN

O think! Please think,
Whom you belong to!
How it would grieve us,
How you'd destroy too,
That sweet achievement,
Yours, his and mine.

CHORUS

I fear this unity
Soon will unwind!

HELEN AND FAUST

Calm yourself! Calm excess,
To please your parents,

Too great a liveliness,
Impulsive violence!
In rural peacefulness,
Brighten the plain.

EUPHORION

If that's what you wish, yes,
I'll stop, I'll restrain.

(He winds, dancing, through the chorus and draws them along with him.)

I'll hover here, lightly
Lively the crew.

Is this the melody,
And measure too?

HELEN

Yes that is neatly done:
Lead all the fairest on,
Through intricacy.

FAUST

Would it were over then!
Such entertainment
Won't delight me.

CHORUS (With Euphorion, dancing nimbly and singing, in interlinking ranks.)

When your arms equally
Are charmingly lifted,
Your curling hair's brightly
Loosened and shifted.
When with a foot so light
Over the earth in flight,
Thither and back again,
Step upon step, you rain,

Then your goal is in sight,
Loveliest child:
All of our hearts, beguiled,
With yours unite.

(Pause).

EUPHORION

You're like so many
Light-footed fawns:
Now to new games we
Are quickly re-born!
I'll be the hunter,
You be the prey.

CHORUS

If you would catch us
Don't be so eager,
We too are anxious
When all is over,
To clasp the form,
You so sweetly display!

EUPHORION

I Now through the vale!
Up hill and down dale!
What I gain easily
Is tedious to see,
Only what's forcibly
Won delights me.

HELEN AND FAUST

How wild he is now! And how stubborn!
There's little hope of moderation.
That's the sound of blowing horns,

Through the woods and valley ringing:

What noise, and what confusion!

CHORUS (Entering one by one, in haste.)

He is running from us swiftly:

Scorning us and always mocking,

Now he drags one from the crowd: she,

The wildest of us all.

EUPHORION (Dragging along a young girl.)

Here I'll drag the little quarry,

To enforce my wish entirely:

For my joy, and my desire,

Press her wilful heart, on fire,

Kiss her stubborn mouth at length

And proclaim my will and strength.

THE GIRL

Let me go! Since there's a strong

Resistant spirit in this body:

My will, like yours, if I'm not wrong,

Says I'm not taken easily.

You think I'm in any danger?

Force of arms is it, you claim!

Hold me fast, you foolish ranger,

And I'll scotch your little game.

(She turns to flame and flashes into the air.)

Follow me through flowing air,

Follow me through caverns bare,

Catch your fleeing prey again!

EUPHORION (Shaking off the flames.)

Rocks all around me here,

Deep in the forest view,

Make me a prisoner,
Though I'm still young and new.
Breezes are blowing fair,
Waves now are breaking there:
I hear both far away,
I'd gladly be there today.

(He leaps further up the rocks.)

HELEN, FAUST AND THE CHORUS

A chamois you'd imitate?
We're fearful of your fate.

EUPHORION

Ever higher I must climb.
Ever further I must see.
Now I know where I stand!
Amidst this semi-island,
Amidst Pelop's country,
Earth – kindred to the sea.

CHORUS

Why not live here, in peace,
Among hills and groves?
Vines then for you we'll seek,
Vines in their rows.
Vines on high ridges stand,
Figs, there, and apples gold,
Stay in this lovely land
Stay, and grow old!

EUPHORION

Do you dream of peaceful days?
Dream, then as dreamers may.
War is the watchword though.

Victory! It rings out so.

CHORUS

He who in time of peace

Wishes for war, soon

Witness's the decease,

Of hope, and fortune.

EUPHORION

Those who made this land,

With danger on every hand,

Free, and courageously,

Gave their blood lavishly:

Bring holy meaning

To that sacrifice –

See us still conquering

All whom we fight!

CHORUS

Look up there, how high he climbs!

Yet he seems to us no smaller:

In his armour, as in triumph,

How he gleams in steel and silver.

EUPHORION

Each one's no longer conscious

Of the high wall, or the rest:

Since the one enduring fortress,

Is the soldier's iron breast.

If you'd live unconquered,

Quickly arm, and fight the real foe:

Every wife an Amazon bred,

And every child a hero.

CHORUS

Sacred Poetry

Climbing, and heavenly!
Shines there, the fairest star,
Far there, and still so far!
And yet it reaches here,
Always, and still we hear,
Joy, where we are.

EUPHORION

No, not as a child do I appear,
This youth comes armed, you see:
In spirit he's already a peer,
Of the strong, the bold, and free.
Now I go!

Now, and lo,
The path to glory shines for me.

HELEN AND FAUST

You've scarcely been called to being,
Scarcely come to daylight's gleam,
And from the heights you're yearning,
For the place of pain, it seems.

Are we two

Naught to you?

Is the sweetest bond a dream?

EUPHORION

Don't you hear the thundering wave?
Through vale on vale the echoes call,
Host on host, in sand and spray,
Shock on shock, in anguished fall.

Understand

The command

Is death, now and for all.

HELEN, FAUST AND THE CHORUS

What horror! What disaster!

Is then death ordained for you?

EUPHORION

Should I watch it from afar?

No! I'll share their trouble too.

HELEN, FAUST AND THE CHORUS

Exuberance, danger,

Deadliest fate!

EUPHORION

Yes! – I am winged here,

I will not wait!

Onward! I must! I must!

Let me but fly!

(He hurls himself into the air: his clothes bear him a moment, his head is illuminated and a streak of light follows).

CHORUS

Icarus! Icarus!

No more! We sigh.

A beautiful youth falls at the parents' feet. We imagine we see a well-known form in the dead body, but the physical part vanishes at once, while an aureole rises like a comet to heaven. The clothes, cloak and lyre remain on the ground.

HELEN AND FAUST

At once, joy is followed,

By bitterest pain.

EUPHORION (From the depths.)

Mother, don't leave me alone,

In the shadows' domain!

(Pause)

CHORUS (Dirge.)

Not alone! – No matter where you are,

For we believe in following you:

Oh! Though from the day you part,

Not one heart will part from you.

We scarcely wish to mourn you, even,

We sing in envy of your fate:

To you the clearest light of heaven,

Gave song and courage, true and great.

Ah! You were born for earthly fate,

High descent and supreme power:

Youth, sadly, while you went astray,

Was torn from you in its first hour!

You saw the world, with clearer vision,

You understood the yearning heart,

The glow of lovely woman's passion,

And all singing's rarest art.

Yet, irresistibly, you ran free,

In nets of indiscipline: you

Divorced yourself violently,

From custom, and from rule:

Until at last, through thinking deeper,

You gave courage greater weight,

And wished to win to splendour,

But that could not be your fate.

Whose then? – The gloomy question,

That destiny itself conceals,

While in days unblessed by fortune,

Our people's silent blood congeals.

But new songs will refresh them,

No longer bow them to the floor,
The earth shall see them once again,
As it saw them once before.

(A complete Pause. The music ends).

HELEN (To Faust.)

Alas, the ancient word proves true for me, as well:

That joy and beauty never lastingly unite.

The thread of life, as the thread of love, is torn:

Painfully, lamenting both, I must say: farewell,

And enter your embrace, once, and then no more.

Persephone, receive me, and this child of ours!

(She embraces Faust: her body vanishes, her dress and veil remain in his hands.)

PHORKYAS (To Faust.)

Hold tight to what alone remains to you.

Don't let the garment go. Already, daemons

Pull at its hem, and wish to drag it down

Into the Underworld. Hold tight to it, now!

It no longer veils the divinity you've lost,

But it is divine. Employ then the priceless,

Noble gift for yourself, and soar on high:

It will carry you quickly from the lowest

To the highest ether, while you can endure.

We'll meet once more, far away from here.

Helen's garments dissolve in mist, surround Faust, lift him into the air, and drift away with him. Phorkyas takes Euphorion's tunic, cloak and lyre from the ground, steps forward to the proscenium, holds them aloft and speaks.

As always, I've discovered something good!

The flame itself has gone, that's understood,

Yet, for the world, I can't be truly sad.

Here's enough to fuel the poets' regiment,
Stir their guild to envy, make them mad,
And if I still can't lend them any talent,
At least I'll have a costume for the lad.
(She seats herself on a low column in the proscenium.)

PANTHALIS

Quick now, girls! We're all free of the magic now,
That old Thessalian woman's enthralling spell,
That jangling dizziness of confusing sound,
Troubling the ear, and more the inner sense.
Down to Hades! Since with solemn step the Queen
Descended swiftly. Let her faithful servants'
Footsteps follow her downward path without delay.
We'll find her beside the Unfathomable Throne.

CHORUS

Of course, queens are happy anywhere:
Even in Hades they're on top,
Associating proudly with their peers,
Persephone's intimate company.
But for us, then, in the background,
Of the asphodel-meadowed depths,
With their long rows of poplars,
Their fruitless crowds of willows,
What fun is there for us,
Piping like bats at twilight,
In cheerless, ghostly whispers?

PANTHALIS

Who wins no name, and wills no noble work,
Belongs to the elements: so away with you!
My own intense desire's to be with my Queen,

The individual's loyalty and not just service.

(Exits.)

ALL

We're returned to the light of day,

No longer individual, it's true,

We feel it, and we know it,

But we'll never go back to Hades.

Ever-living Nature,

Makes the most valid claim

On our spirits, and we on her.

A SECTION OF THE CHORUS

We in all the thousand branches'

Whispering tremors, swaying murmurs,

Sweetly rocked, will lightly draw

The root-born founts of being upwards,

To the twigs: and now with leaves,

And now with the exuberant blossom,

We'll adorn their floating tresses,

Freely thriving in the breezes.

Straight away, now, as the fruit falls,

Happy crowds and flocks will gather,

For the picking and the tasting,

Swift-arriving, busy-thronging:

Bending down, now, all around us,

As before the early gods.

A SECOND SECTION OF THE CHORUS

We,

Against the rocky cliff face,

By the smooth far-gleaming mirror,

We will nestle, softly moving,

In the gentle waves that flatter:
Listening, hearing every echo,
Birdsong, now, or reedy fluting,
To the fearful voice of Pan, too,
We'll provide a ready answer:
To the murmuring, send a murmur:
To the thunder roll our thunder,
In earth-shaking repetition,
In threefold, or tenfold echo.

A THIRD SECTION OF THE CHORUS

Sisters!
We, of nimbler senses,
Hurry onwards with the waters:
For the richly covered, far-off,
Mountain ranges each entice us.
Ever deeper, ever downward,
In meandering curves we'll water
First the meadows, then the pastures,
Then the house and the garden,
Where the slender tips of cypress,
Over banks and watery mirror,
Over all the landscape, mark it,
Soaring skywards in the air.

A FOURTH SECTION OF THE CHORUS

Wander where you please,
You others: we will circle, we will rustle
Round the densely planted hillside,
Where the vine stock's growing green:
There, each day, we'll pay attention
To the cultivator's passion,

Watch his diligence and care, there:
Watch for its uncertain outcome.
How he hoes, how he digs there,
How he heaps, and prunes, and ties,
Prays to all the gods above him,
Most of all prays to the sun god.
The effeminate one, Bacchus,
Gives scant thought to faithful servants,
Rests in arbours, lolls in caverns,
Flirting with the youngest Faun.
Whatsoever he might need there,
For his half-befuddled dreaming,
Is left for him in wineskins,
Stored around in jars and vessels,
Right and left, in cool recesses,
Gathered through the endless ages.
But when the gods, that's Helios
We mean before all others,
Cooling, wetting, warming, heating,
Fill the vineyard's horn of plenty,
Where the silent grower laboured,
Suddenly it's all enlivened,
And in every leaf there's rustling,
Rustling now from vine to vine.
Baskets creaking, buckets rattling,
The tubs are carried groaning,
All towards enormous vats there,
To the lusty treaders' dance:
So, then, all the sacred bounty,
Of the pure bred juicy harvest,

Fiercely trodden, spurting, foaming,
Mingled there, is crudely squashed.
Now the cymbals' brazen clamour's
Ringing boldly in our ears,
As Dionysus from his Mysteries
Is unveiled, and is revealed:
Here with his goat-foot Satyrs,
Whirling goat-foot Satyresses,
And Silenus's, unruly, long-eared ass,
That brays amongst them.
Nothing's spared! The cloven feet now,
Trample on all decency:
All the senses whirl, bewildered: hideously,
Ears are stunned, there.
Drunkards fumble for their wine-cups,
Head and bellies over-full,
Here and there one has misgivings,
But can only swell the riot,
Since to hold the latest vintage,
One must drain the oldest skin!

The curtain falls. Phorkyas in the proscenium rises to full height, steps down from her tragic buskins, removes her mask and veil, and reveals herself as Mephistopheles, to point the last lines, by way of epilogue.

PART II ACT IV SCENE I: HIGH MOUNTAINS

Fierce, jagged rocky peaks. A cloud approaches, pauses and settles on a projecting ledge. It parts.

FAUST (Steps out.)

Gazing at those deep solitudes beneath my feet,

I tread the mountain brink with deliberation,
Leaving the cloud-vehicle that carried me,
Softly, through bright day, over land and ocean.
Slowly, not dispersing, now, it moves away.
With a rolling movement, travelling eastward,
And the eye follows in wondering admiration.
Moving it divides, wave-like and changeable.
Yet it shapes itself – My eyes can't deceive me! –
I see, reclining there, nobly, on sunlit pillows,
A godlike female form, though it's immense!
An image of Juno, Leda, or Helen herself,
Royally lovely, floating before my eyes.
Ah! It's already melting! Formlessly huge
And towering it hangs in far icy eastern hills,
Reflecting deep meaning from fine fleeting days.
Yet a soft, delicate band of mist still clings
To head and body, coolly caressing: and cheers me.
Now it lifts lightly, soars higher and higher, there,
Condensing. Does its enticing shape deceive me,
Like some long-forgotten joy of earliest youth?
The first riches of the heart's depths flow again:
I'd liken it to Aurora's Love, light-winged:
The first, swiftly felt, scarcely understood glance,
That outshines every treasure when it's held fast.
The lovely form rises, now, like spiritual beauty,
Not melting further, but lifting through the air,
And carries, far-off, the best of what I am.

(A seven-league boot strides forward: another follows immediately.
Mephistopheles steps out of them. The boots stride off quickly).

Now that I call real onward striding!

But tell me why you're all alone,
Climbing here among the horrors,
In these horrendous gulfs of stone?
I know them well, but with another face,
In truth, the floor of Hell's a similar place.

FAUST

You're never short of a foolish fantasy:
You've dusted that one off again I see.

MEPHISTOPHELES (Seriously)

When the Lord God – and I know why as well –
Banished us from the air to deepest deeps,
There, where round and round the glow of Hell,
An eternal inward self-fuelled fire leaps,
We found we were too brightly illuminated,
Quite crowded, and uncomfortably situated.
All the devils fell to fits of coughing,
The vents above them and beneath them puffing,
Hell swollen with the sulphur's stench and acid,
Gave out its gas! The bubble was so massive,
That soon the level surface of the earth,
Thick as it was, was forced to crack and burst.
So we all gained another mountain from it,
And what was ground, before, now is summit.
From this they deduced the truest law,
Turn lowest into highest, to be sure,
Since we escaped from fiery prison there,
To excessive power in the freer air:
An open mystery, yet well concealed,
And only lately publicly revealed.

FAUST

To me the mountain masses are nobly dumb,
I don't ask why they are, or where they're from.
When Nature in herself was grounded
The ball of Earth she neatly rounded,
Delighting in the mountains and the deep,
Setting rock on rock, and peak on peak,
Sloping the hills conveniently downward,
Softening them to vales, gently bounded.
They grow green, and joyfully she ranges,
Without the need for any violent changes.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Yes, so you say! It's clear as day to you:
But he knows otherwise who saw it too.
I was there, while the void seethed below,
Enduring all that swollen, fiery tide:
When Moloch's hammer forged cliffs, at a blow,
And flung the ruined mountains, far and wide.
Those foreign boulders scattered through the land:
Who knows what forces left them high and dry?
Philosophers all have failed to understand,
The rocks are there, and we must let them stand,
We've damaged them, already, where they lie.
Only the true believers, the people, know,
And nothing will shake their fond opinion,
They, since their wisdom ripened long ago,
Say it's due to Satan's wonderful dominion.
The traveller climbs, with faith's crutch, over ridges,
Across the Devil's rocks, and Devil's bridges.

FAUST

Yet it's still worth noting, since every feature,

Reveals what it is the Devil sees in Nature.

MEPHISTOPHELES

What's that to me! Let Nature be what she is!

The Devil was there: that's what I'd have you notice!

We're the folk, you see, who achieve great things:

The signs are tumult, force, and what nonsense brings! –

But shall I make myself understood at last: it's best:

Did nothing at all of ours please you in the slightest?

You've looked down, from immeasurable heights,

On the riches of the world, and its splendid sights.

Yet, hard as you may be to fire,

Didn't you feel some deep desire?

FAUST

I did! I saw a mighty plan.

Guess!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Oh, that's easily done.

I'd find myself some capital city,

It's core the citizens' greedy plenty,

Crooked alleys and pointed gables,

Cabbage, turnips, onions, market tables:

Butcher's stalls where flies all cluster:

Round the fattened joints, pass muster:

Wherever you move, there you'll find

Stench and activity, intertwined.

Then wide streets, and wider squares,

Measured, elegant thoroughfares:

And, at their end, no gates to bar you:

Just boundless far-flung suburbs too.

There I love to see all the carriages go by,

The noisy rushing about from side to side,
The endless running to and fro,
Of scattered ants in ceaseless flow.
And when I walk, and when I ride,
I'd be the central point implied,
A hundred thousand honouring me.

FAUST

That could never content me though.
A swelling crowd is fine to see,
All well-fed in their way, agreed,
Well-bred, well-taught, all the three –
Yet you've only made more rebels grow.

MEPHISTOPHELES

For myself, I'd deliberately create
A pleasure house in a pleasant place.
Woods, hills, fields, meadows, open ground,
With splendid gardens all around.
Between green walls of velvet leaves,
Straight walks, where artful shadows please,
Waterfalls, spanning the rocks, in pairs,
And all those kinds of water-jet affairs:
Rising nobly, while all round the dish,
A thousand little fountains hiss and piss.
Then I'd have a hut, snug and convenient,
Where beautiful women might be content:
And pass the boundless time away
In the sweetest solitude, and play.
Women, I say: since, one and all,
I think of their loveliness in the plural.

FAUST

Sardanapalus! Modern and rural!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Then might one ask to know your yearning?

It's something daring: I've no doubt.

Since the moon was near you in your journeying,

Might it be moon-madness you're about?

FAUST

Not at all! This earthly round

Grants space for some mighty thing.

We'll attempt what's astonishing,

New strength for daring work I've found.

MEPHISTOPHELES

And shall you earn more glory by it too?

One sees the heroines have been with you.

FAUST

I'll win power, and property!

The deed is all, and not the glory.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Yet future poets' verse will stress

The splendour of your bright success,

And inspire fools to foolishness.

FAUST

All that's far from you, indeed.

What do you know of what Men need?

Your contrary being, bitter, dire,

What does it know of Man's desire?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Let it all be as you wish it then!

Trust fancy's flight to me again.

FAUST

My eyes were drawn towards the deepest ocean:
It swelled, and heaped itself, upon itself,
Then ebbed, and shook its waves again in motion,
Storming towards the wide shore's level shelf.
And that annoyed me: as the exuberance
Of a free spirit, that values all its rights,
Will transmit uneasy feelings to the dance
Of the passionate blood that it excites.
I thought it chance: I gazed more intensely:
The waves paused, rolled away from me,
Far from what they'd reached in their pride:
Time passes, and then once more comes the tide.

MEPHISTOPHELES (To the audience.)

There's nothing new in that to greet my ears,
I've known it for a hundred thousand years.

FAUST (Continuing passionately.)

It sweeps along, to whatever thousand ends:
Fruitless itself, it fruitlessly extends:
It swells and rolls and breaks and overwhelms
The empty stretches of its barren realms.
There wave rules power-inspired wave, again
Draws back – and yet still there's nothing gained.
If anything makes me despair, of my intent,
It's the aimless force of that wild element!
Then my spirit dared to soar high above:
Here I must fight, and this I must remove.
And it's possible! – However tides may flow,
At last they nestle round the hills below:
So they are tamed in their exuberance,
A modest height tops their proud advance,

A modest depth draws them forcefully on.
Quick, through my mind, leapt plan after plan:
Let rich enjoyment be mine for evermore,
To keep the noble ocean from the shore,
To channel all the wide and watery waste,
And urge it backwards to its own deep place.
Step by step I know how to design it:
That's my desire, so be brave and promote it!

On the right, from the distance, behind the audience, the sound of drums
and military music.

MEPHISTOPHELES

That's trivial! Can you hear the distant drums?

FAUST

War again! The wise man hates it when it comes.

MEPHISTOPHELES

War or peace, it's wise to seize the chance,
And gain advantage from the circumstance.
One waits, one notes each favourable moment.
Opportunity's about, so Faust, be ardent!

FAUST

Spare me all your riddles, if you please!
Once and for all, say, what am I to seize?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Nothing was hidden from me on my journey:
The noble Emperor's consumed by worry.
You know him. While we both supplied him,
Those illusory riches in his hand, beside him,
The whole world then was open to him.
Young, the throne was granted to him,
And it pleased him to assume, wrongly,

That he could easily combine the two,
Enjoy the essential and the lovely too:
Both government and pleasure, jointly.

FAUST

A fatal error! He who wishes to command
Must make command his joy, and though
His mind is full of all the noblest plans,
What he intends, must let no other know.
What he whispers then in some faithful ear,
Is done, and the world will be amazed to hear.
So he'll remain supreme, above them all,
And noblest: pleasure comes before a fall.

MEPHISTOPHELES

That's not the man!
He enjoyed himself, and how!
Meanwhile anarchy brought the empire down,
While great fought little, and orders crossed,
And brothers fought with brothers, and were lost,
Castle with castle, city against city,
The guilds at war with the nobility:
The bishops with their congregation:
No friends, and only a hostile nation.
In churches death and slaughter: through the gate
Every merchant and trader swift to his fate.
Now, everywhere, man's audacity shows:
The word is 'defend your life'. And so it goes.

FAUST

So it goes – it stumbles, falls, and stands again,
Then tumbles headlong, and lies there in pain.

MEPHISTOPHELES

None dared to criticise the situation,
Each could, and would improve his station.
Even the smallest wished to be great enough.
But for the best it proved a step too much.
The capable declared, with energy:
'He who brings peace can have the mastery.
The Emperor can't, and will not – let us choose
A new Emperor, who'll inspire the realm anew.
While each man achieves security,
In a world that's re-created freshly,
Let peace and justice there be wedded, too.'

FAUST

That smacks of priesthood.

MEPHISTOPHELES

The priests were there, yes,
Defending their well-fed stomachs with the rest,
And they were more involved than all the others.
The rebels swarmed: and were blessed as brothers:
Then the Emperor, whom we had made happy,
Advanced, for his last battle, that's as maybe.

FAUST

I'm sorry for him: He was so frank and open.

MEPHISTOPHELES

We'll watch! While there's life there's hope again.
Let's set him free, from this narrow valley!
He's a thousand times saved, if they would rally.
Who knows how the dice might fall, if so:
Good luck, and he'll have treasures to bestow.

(They cross over the middle range of hills, and view the army in the valley.
Drums and military music sound from below).

The position they've taken, there, looks fine:
We'll join them: victory – in the nick of time.

FAUST

And what should I expect to see?
A hollow show! Blind magic! Trickery!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Strategy, and how to win a battle!
Think hard, and be on your mettle,
Keep dreaming of your mighty aim.
If we return the Emperor his land,
You can kneel, and make a claim,
In payment, for the boundless strand.

FAUST

You've managed all the other things,
So win the battle, and what it brings!

MEPHISTOPHELES

No, you'll win it! There, beneath,
You'll be their commander-in-chief.

FAUST

That's a somewhat glorified position:
Knowing nothing, to command the mission!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Leave it to the General Staff to care,
And see a Field-Marshal newborn there.
I know all about Un-Councils of War
Form your War Council, quickly, therefore,
From ancient hills' ancient human power:
Bless those who can pile peaks in a tower.

FAUST

What do I see, what warriors approach?

Have you truly roused the mountain folk?

MEPHISTOPHELES

No! But like Shakespeare's Peter Quince,

I've picked the very best of what there is.

The Three Mighty Warriors appear.

Here are my lads arriving now!

You see they're all of different ages,

And clothes and armour too: allow

That you'll be fine when battle rages.

(To the audience.)

Every child today loves to see

Knights in armour take the floor:

Allegorical though they may be,

They'll delight them all the more.

BULLYBOY (Young, lightly armed, plainly clothed.)

If someone meets me face to face,

I'll shake a fist right there in his ugly mug,

And when the yellow-belly runs away,

I'll grasp his hair, and give a nasty tug.

GRAB-QUICK (Mature, well-armed, richly dressed.)

Such idle brawling's foolishness,

That's how to ruin the day:

Don't be slow first to possess,

Then afterwards you'll get your way.

HOLD-TIGHT (Older, heavily armed, without a cloak.)

But that's the path where little's won!

Great possession's quickly gone,

Vanishing in the stream of life.

It's fine to take, but best to hold:

Let grey hairs command the bold,

And you'll lose nothing in the strife.

PART II ACT IV SCENE II: ON THE HEADLAND

Drums and military music from below. The Emperor's tent is pitched. The Emperor, Commander-in-Chief, Guardsmen.

THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

It still seems the most likely strategy,
To have made our whole army wait,
Here below, in this convenient valley:
I hope the choice is truly fortunate.

THE EMPEROR

Whatever will happen now, we'll soon see:
But I don't like this half-retreat, it's weak.

THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

Look here, my Prince,
On our right flank!
This terrain is one that Generals like to thank:
The hills aren't steep, but there's no ready access,
So it protects us, while denying them success:
We're half-concealed, on undulating ground:
Their cavalry won't dare to circle round.

THE EMPEROR

There's nothing left for me to do, but praise:
Here strength and bravery may have their day.

THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

There, in the centre of the level space,
See the phalanx, eagerly in place.
The lances shine and glitter in the air,
Through the sunlit mist of morning, there.

And all the mighty square is swaying darkly!
Thousands inspired to fierce activity.
There you can see our power en masse,
I trust it to split the enemy in half.

THE EMPEROR

This is the first time I've ever gazed on such a sight.
Forces like these are worth double when they fight.

THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

I've nothing to report about our left,
Valiant heroes hold the rocky cleft,
Weapons gleam across the rocky dale,
A vital pass protects the narrow vale.
Here the enemy power, I think, will shatter,
Taken unawares in this bloody matter.

THE EMPEROR

There they advance, my faithless kith and kin,
Even as they call me brother, uncle, cousin,
Ever more widely, allowing men's respect
For throne and sceptre to fall into neglect:
Ruining the empire with their fighting,
And now, against me, rebelliously uniting.
The mob is swayed, uncertain in its mind,
Then, wherever the stream flows, flows behind.

THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

A faithful soldier hastens towards us,
Look, one sent for news, perhaps he's had some luck!

FIRST SCOUT

Luckily we met success,
Brave and cunning in our skill,
Probing, out to east and west,

Yet bring you bad news, still.

Many swear their loyalty,

Many a faithful company:

Yet all idly apologetic:

Quailing inwardly, apathetic.

THE EMPEROR

From selfishness they learn self-preservation,

Not honour, affection, gratitude, dedication.

No one thinks that when time brings the reckoning,

The neighbour's house ignites theirs while it's burning.

THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

The second scout's approaching,

Slowly, on stumbling legs: a man full weary.

SECOND SCOUT

At first we easily detected

The nature of their wild plan:

Then, suddenly, and unexpected,

A second Emperor was at hand.

And in a calm, and orderly manner

Withdrew the army from the deep:

Unfurling his deceitful banner:

They all followed him, like sheep!

THE EMPEROR

A second Emperor's fortunate for me:

Since I'm the Emperor, plain as plain can be.

Now as a soldier I'll dress myself, again,

In armour, dedicated to this higher aim.

My entertainments, fine as they all were,

Lacking in nothing, never brought me danger.

While you suggested something innocent,

My heart longed to fight the tournament:
And had you not dissuaded me from war,
I'd have shone in glorious deeds before.
But when I was mirrored in that realm of fire,
I felt my heart was mine, and made entire:
The fierce element entered in my fate,
Only a dream, and yet the dream was great.
I've thought confusedly of fame and glory:
Yet all was my own neglect, an evil story.

(The heralds are sent to challenge the rival Emperor to single combat. Faust enters, in armour, with half-closed visor. The Three Mighty Warriors appear armed and dressed as previously described).

FAUST

We're here, and hope our presence is accepted:
Though needless, caution's often well respected.
You know how hill-folk consider and explore:
They study nature and the mountains' lore.
The spirits drawn from out the level valley,
Are happier than ever in the wide hill-country.
They still work the labyrinthine masses,
Among metallic fumes of noble gases.
Intent on separating, proving, blending,
Their only aim some innovative finding.
With gentle touch and spiritual power,
They build transparent forms, by the hour:
Then in eternal silence, in the crystal,
They watch the destiny of all things mortal.

THE EMPEROR

I've heard it said: and I believe it's true:
But, gallant soldier, what's all that to you?

FAUST

Your true and honourable servant there,
Is that Sabine, the Norcian Necromancer.
What fearful fate once hung above his head!
Crackling wood, the stinging fire ahead:
Dry timber packed already round his feet,
With rolls of pitch and brimstone all complete:
No warrior, god, or devil to the rescue,
The Emperor saved his life: and that was you,
In Rome: he was obliged, and none the less
Anxiously, he contemplates your progress.
Wholly forgotten: every hour, just for you,
He studies the stars and the abyss too.
He sent us on, by the swiftest path,
To help you. Great is the mountain craft:
There Nature works omnipotent, and free,
Though foolish clerics call it wizardry.

THE EMPEROR

On joyful days, when we greet our guests,
Who gather pleasantly, with happy jests,
It gives us pleasure, when they pull and push,
And fill the halls and chambers with their crush.
Yet the brave man meets with noblest welcome,
When in fierce support he deigns to come,
At the dawning of some perilous day,
When fate's balance holds us in its sway.
Yet while some time this moment can afford,
Hold back your strong hand from the eager sword,
Honour the instant, when thousands march,
For or against me, taking up the torch.

Self's the Man! Who claims the crown and throne,
Must be worthy of the honour, on his own.
May the phantom now that stands against me,
Who calls himself the Emperor of my country,
The army's leader, and the lords' crowned head,
Be hurled by my own fist among the dead.

FAUST

Whatever the need to finish what you've started,
It would go ill if you and your head were parted.
Isn't your helmet decked with plume and crest?
It shields the head that fills our hearts with zest.
Without a head what can the members do?
If it should sleep, they sink in silence too:
If it's injured, they're all hurt alike,
And if it's healed they quickly stir to life.
Swiftly the arm will assert its right:
And shield the head then from the fight:
The sword at once perceives its duty,
Strikes again, and parries strongly:
The brave foot, owning its luck again,
Plants itself on the necks of the slain.

THE EMPEROR

Such is my wrath, that's how I'd use the fool,
And set his head in front of me, for a stool.

HERALDS (Returning.)

Our advances they reject,
With little honour, or respect.
Our strong, and noble ultimatum,
They treated as an empty statement:
'Your Emperor is wholly lost,

An echo of some ancient rhyme:

When we think about the past,

His tale will be: Once upon a time.'

FAUST

It's come to pass as the best of men demand,

Those firm and true, at your right hand:

There is the foe: your men stand by us:

Order the advance, the time's propitious.

THE EMPEROR

I hereby relinquish the command.

(To the Commander-In-Chief)

Prince, I entrust the duty to your hand.

THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

Then let the right wing start its assault!

The enemy left's ascending, even now,

And in a moment will be forced to halt.

To our young faithfuls they will have to bow.

FAUST

Let this brave hero, straight away,

Join your ranks, without delay,

So that in your ranks he might,

Make a brave show in the fight.

(He points to the Mighty Warrior on the right.)

BULLY-BOY (Coming forward.)

He who shows his face to me, won't turn

Before his front and back teeth shatter:

He who shows his back to me will earn

A blow to make his head much flatter.

And if your soldiers then advance

With sword and mace, together,

Man after man, the foe will dance,
And in their own blood quickly smother.
(He exits.)

THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

Let the central phalanx follow slowly,
Engage the enemy with force and cunning:
There on the right they're almost ready
To surrender, you can see them running.

FAUST (Pointing to the central Warrior)

Let this man follow at your command!
He's quick, and grabs with either hand.

GRAB-QUICK (Comes forward.)

The thirst for plunder now will greet
The Emperor's troops' advancing feet,
And all will gather, with intent,
At the rival Emperor's tent.

He won't linger on his throne:

I'll lead the phalanx on my own.

SWIFT-PLUNDER (A camp follower, fawning on him.)

Although he and I aren't wed,

He's my sweetheart. Here instead

Autumn ripens for the bold!

Woman's fierce when she takes hold,

Merciless, in a plundering crowd,

Forward to victory! All's allowed.

(They exit together.)

THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

As I anticipated on our left flank,
They hurl their right, in force, at last.
We'll resist their furious ranks,

And keep them from the narrow pass.

FAUST (Beckoning to the Warrior on the left.)

Prince, take note of this man too:

No shame if the strong are stronger than you.

HOLD-TIGHT (Coming forward.)

Let the flanks forget their fear!

I seize the ground where I appear:

In me are born the powers of old,

No lightning splits what I shall hold.

MEPHISTOPHELES (Descending from above.)

Now see how from the hinterland

Of this rocky jagged land,

An armed host bursts forth

On narrow pathways from the north,

With sword and helmet, shield and spear,

Forming a rampart in our rear:

They wait for the signal to charge on.

(Aside, to the knowing ones.)

You mustn't ask me where they're from.

I've gathered them from everywhere,

The armouries all around are bare:

They stood on foot, and sat astride,

Like lords of earth on every side:

They were emperors, knights, and kings,

Now they're the empty shells of things:

I've dressed so many spirits for the strife,

It's like the Middle Ages come to life.

Whichever little devils are inside,

They'll have enough effect to turn the tide.

(Aloud.)

Listen how they show their anger,
Jostling, in metallic clangour!
The ragged banners flutter free,
That waited restless for the breeze.
Think: here's an ancient race that's ready
To mingle in our new dispute, and gladly.

A tremendous peal of trumpets from above: a perceptible tremor in the hostile army.

FAUST

The far horizon darkens swiftly,
Yet, here and there, and meaningfully,
There's an incipient crimson glow,
Already the battlefield gleams there,
The rocks, the woods, the atmosphere,
The very heavens join the show.

MEPHISTOPHELES

The right flank holds in strength:
There's Bullyboy the nimble giant,
Towering over all, defiant,
And charging them at length.

THE EMPEROR

First I saw an arm uplifted,
Then at least a dozen shifted:
The thing's unnatural.

FAUST

Don't you know the bands of mist
That drift round the Sicilian cliffs?
There, in the daylight, clear,
In mid-air, hovering about
Mirrored in peculiar cloud,

Marvellous images appear.
Cities wander to and fro,
Gardens rise above, below,
As form on form fills the air.

THE EMPEROR

Yet it's suspicious! All about
The tips of spears are shining out:
On our phalanx' gleaming lances,
I see a crowd of flame-lets dances.
It looks quite ghostly there, to me.

FAUST

Forgive me, Lord, those are the traces
Of natural spirits, vanished races,
A glimmer of the Dioscuri,
Sailors invoke in tempest's fury:
They show their last strength there.

THE EMPEROR

But tell me: who then might command
Nature's assistance for our land,
This gathering of the rare?

MEPHISTOPHELES

Who else than that noble Master,
Who takes your destiny to heart?
The thought of military disaster
Moves him deeply, stirs his art.
In gratitude, he wants to save you,
Though he himself should suffer too.

THE EMPEROR

They cheered me, when I was invested:
So I was keen to see my power tested:

I found it useful, without much thought, as ruler,
To send that wise man where the air was cooler.
I robbed the clergy of a fond desire,
And hardly won their favour from the fire.
Now that so many years have gone
Is this the reward of what I'd done?

FAUST

Good deeds from the heart reap riches:
Let your glance stray upwards now!
I think he'll send a sign, a show,
Attend: straight away it's as he wishes.

THE EMPEROR

An eagle soars in the upper air,
A Gryphon attacks him there.

FAUST

Attend: It's an auspicious feature.
The Gryphon's a fabulous creature:
How could he forget who's regal,
And tangle with a real eagle?

THE EMPEROR

And now, they fly in wider gyres,
They wheel together: swiftly now
Then dash against each other's bow,
So neck and chest are ripped entire.

FAUST

Now note the miserable Gryphon,
Ripped and rumples, hurt quite badly,
Now, with his lion's tail all torn,
He falls, and vanishes in a tree.

THE EMPEROR

As it's prophesied, so let it be!
This whole thing's astounding me.
MEPHISTOPHELES (Towards the right.)
Driven by blows, ten times repeated,
The enemy force has retreated,
And in the uncertain fight
Drifts away towards the right,
So defusing all the force
Of their army's sinister course.
Our phalanx with its spears tightening
Moves to the right, and like lightning
Strikes them in the weakest place:
Now like the storm-driven waves
They roar, with opposing force,
Wildly on their dual course:
Gloriously all sound dies away,
And victory is ours, I'd say!
THE EMPEROR (On the left, to Faust.)
See! Something looks suspicious,
Our position's inauspicious,
Not a stone's hurled in the air,
The cliffs below are taken there,
Bare the narrows, to the pass.
Now! The enemy en masse
Are ever nearer to the sun,
Perhaps we're already overrun:
An end to this unholy strife!
Your arts won't save my life.
(Pause).

MEPHISTOPHELES

See, my two ravens come winging,
What news might they be bringing?
I fear we're in trouble here.

THE EMPEROR

What do they mean these wretched birds?
Their black wings turn hitherwards,
Out of the heat of battle they steer.

MEPHISTOPHELES (To the ravens.)

Both of you sit by my ear,
None are lost if you are near,
Your council's always good to hear.

FAUST (To the Emperor.)

You'll know about homing pigeons
Ones that return from distant regions,
To their nest, and food, and young.
Here's a slightly different kind:
Pigeon post in peace is fine,
Raven posts to war belong.

MEPHISTOPHELES

The birds announce a dreadful fate:
Beware the enemy at the gate,
Near our heroes' rocky wall!
They've attained the narrow height,
If they gain the pass, and fight,
Our position's critical.

THE EMPEROR

So I'm betrayed at last!
Into your net I'll be cast:
I shudder as it entangles me.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Courage, now! Not yet, their victory.

Patience and skill unties the knot!

It's often fiercest at the end.

The pair of messengers, we've got:

Command me, I'll command them!

THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF (Who has arrived, meanwhile.)

You've united with this pair,

Tormenting me while I was there,

No luck comes from wizardry.

I can't fathom now how to win

Those should finish, that begin:

Take this baton away from me.

THE EMPEROR

Keep it for another day, one better

And blessed with better fortune.

I shudder at this messenger,

And his company of ravens.

(To Mephistopheles.)

I'll not grant the baton to you,

You're not the proper man:

Give commands: free us too!

Do whatever it is you can.

(He exits into his tent with the Commander-In-Chief.)

MEPHISTOPHELES

Let that blunt stick protect the man!

It's of small use in anyone's hand:

It has a cross, too, painted on.

FAUST

What can we do?

MEPHISTOPHELES

It's already done!

Now dark Cousins, hurry from the scene,
To the mountain lake! Greet the Undines,
And beg from them their gleaming flood.
Their female arts, those difficult of knowing,
Can divorce appearances from being,
And all still swear it's being that they're seeing.

(Pause)

FAUST

With flattery our pair of ravens
Have so charmed those water maidens
That trickling flows at once begin.
And many a bald, dry ridge of mountain
Becomes a swollen, rushing fountain:
The enemy can no longer win.

MEPHISTOPHELES

It's not a greeting to which they're used.
The bravest climbers appear confused.

FAUST

Now, powerfully, streams pour on streams,
Sweeping from gorges with redoubled gleams,
A river now throws up an arching veil:
Pours over the rocky level in a tide,
Runs foaming down, on every side,
And, stepwise, hurls itself into the dale.
What use their fine, heroic resistance?
The vast wave roars, and fills the distance.
I shudder myself at this wild waterfall.

MEPHISTOPHELES

I can see nothing of these watery lies,

They only serve for fooling human eyes,
I delight instead in wonders that befall.
In companies, their men plunge down,
The fools imagine that they'll drown,
While free to breathe, on solid ground,
With swimming strokes, they run around.
It's bewildering them all.

The Ravens return.

I'll praise you to the noble Master: but see,
If you'd like to display your own mastery,
Hurry to the glowing smithy,
Where the dwarf folk never weary,
Hammering sparks from steel and stone.
Ask for, once you've chattered first,
A fire to shine: sparkle, and burst,
The finest that man's ever known.

It's true that far off lightning flashes,
And stars that fall in sudden dashes,
Can happen any summer's night:
But lightning in the tangled bushes,
And stars that fizzle in the rushes,
They're not such a common sight.
Don't trouble about my command,
Ask first, then afterwards demand.

The Ravens fly off. All takes place as ordered.
Darkness cloaks the enemy!
Their footsteps meet uncertainty!
Everywhere are wandering flares,
And those sudden blinding glares!
It's all beautiful indeed,

Now some noise is what we need.

FAUST

The empty armour from each vaulted room,
Feels itself stiffen in the airy gloom:
There it rattles, clatters all around,
A marvellous, and deceptive sound.

MEPHISTOPHELES

That's it! They no longer feel constrained:
Already their blows fall unrestrained,
As in the nobility of their former life.
Breastplates and helmets gleam,
As Guelph and Ghibelline,
They quickly renew eternal strife.
Locked in hereditary bile,
They prove themselves, un-reconciled:
Far and wide the noise is rife.
In the end, by all the Devils, yes!
Partisan hatred's still the best,
Till final ruin ends the tale:
Here rise the sounds of utter panic,
And others bitter and Satanic,
Terrify, along the vale.
Warlike tumult from the orchestra, finally changing to a lively martial air.

PART II ACT IV SCENE III: THE RIVAL EMPEROR'S TENT

A throne amongst rich trappings. Grab-quick and Swift-plunder.

SWIFT-PLUNDER

We're the first ones here, I see!

GRAB-QUICK

No Raven flies as fast as me.

SWIFT-PLUNDER

O! Look at the treasure there on top!

What will I grab? How shall I stop?

GRAB-QUICK

The whole place is still full of loot,

I don't know where to start, in truth!

SWIFT-PLUNDER

This fur-rug, this'll go far,

Often my bed's far too hard.

GRAB-QUICK

Here's a morning star in steel,

I've always longed for one, I feel.

SWIFT-PLUNDER

This red mantle, trimmed with gold,

Is like the one my dream foretold.

GRAB-QUICK (Taking a weapon.)

With this the deed is swiftly done,

You strike him dead and then move on.

You've already packed so much stuff,

And yet you've nothing good enough

Leave your plunder in its place,

And put a casket in the space!

The army's pay is what they hold,

In their fat bellies, purest gold.

SWIFT-PLUNDER

What a murderous weight it is!

I can't lift: I can't carry it.

GRAB-QUICK

Bend down: quick! You'll have to bow!

I'll strap it to your back for now.

SWIFT-PLUNDER

Oh! Ah! Now it's in front, too!

The weight's broken my cross in two.

The chest falls and bursts open.

GRAB-QUICK

There's the red gold in a heap –

Quickly now, take and keep!

SWIFT-PLUNDER (Crouching.)

Quickly then, just fill my lap!

There'll still be enough perhaps.

GRAB-QUICK

That's enough! Now off you go!

Swift-plunder rises.

Oh! Your apron has a hole!

Wherever you walk or stand,

You're sowing gold on every hand.

GUARDSMEN OF THE TRUE EMPEROR

What are you doing here,

At leisure, rummaging in the Imperial treasure?

GRAB-QUICK

We risked our bodies in the ranks,

And take away our share of thanks.

That's the rule, in enemy tents,

And we're soldiers too, my friends.

THE GUARDSMEN

That won't wash in our army:

You can't be soldier and thief equally:

Whoever serves our Emperor,
Is an honest soldier, and no more.

GRAB-QUICK

That honesty, we know it, son,
It's called: a contribution.

You're all the same: it's a crime,
'Give!' is the password every time,
(To Swift-plunder.)

Take what you've got: and leave the rest,
Here one's hardly a welcome guest.

(They both exit.)

A GUARDSMAN

Tell me why you didn't land
That churl with a good right hand.

A SECOND GUARDSMAN

I don't know, my strength was gone,
They were a pair of ghostly ones.

A THIRD GUARDSMAN

There was something nasty in my eye,
I couldn't see: they flickered by.

A FOURTH GUARDSMAN

I don't know what to say:
It was sweltering hot today,
So sultry, so close as well,
One man stood, another fell:
You staggered around and struck, in one,
At every blow you killed someone,
There was a mist in front of your eyes,
Then a buzz, and rustle, and hiss went by:
So it went on, and here we are, now,

I don't know what happened, anyhow.

The Emperor enters, accompanied by Four Princes. The Guardsmen exit.

Now, let him do as he may! The battle here is done,

The host is scattered in flight, across the field new won.

Here is the traitor's treasure, and his empty throne,

Where tapestries hang round, closed in a narrow zone.

Protected by our guard of honour, we'll wait

Imperially, for the people's delegate.

Messengers of joy arrive from every side:

The Empire's calm, and we're mutually reconciled.

Though some wizardry was involved in our fight,

In the end we fought with only our own true might.

There were of course a few lucky accidents:

Stones from the sky, a shower of blood on their tents,

Strange and mighty sounds from the rocky caves,

That lifted our hearts, and terrified their braves.

The conquered fell, beneath our relentless scorn,

Praising the kind god, our ranks cheer once more.

And all, without coercion, shout together as one:

'God be praised!' from a million throats is wrung.

Yet in highest praise I turn my own pious glance

As I seldom do, towards my own circumstance.

A young man may well squander his early days,

But age teaches him all the error of his ways.

Therefore at once without delay I bind you to me,

You noble four, to my House, Court and country.

(To the First.)

Prince, yours was the army's ordering, wisely planned,

Then, at the height of the battle, its bold command:

Now act, in time of peace, as the hour requires you to,

I name you High-Marshall, and confer the sword on you.

THE HIGH-MARSHALL

Your loyal army, deployed, on my orders,
Internally, will now defend your borders,
Let us, too, prepare the table on feast days,
In your spacious castle's ancestral ways.
Always to be your High Majesty's defence,
Standing beside you, or marching in advance.

THE EMPEROR (To the Second.)

You, who show yourself as gracious as you're brave,
Be our High-Chamberlain: the office is grave.
You become the overseer of all our attendants,
Great evil comes from strife among dependants:
So let your example honourably recall
How they may please their prince, the court and all.

THE HIGH-CHAMBERLAIN

Be gracious,
That the Lords may further your great aim:
Assist the best and cause no injury to the lame,
Be open without cunning: be calm without deceit!
If you know me, Sire, my ambition is complete.
But on the feast may I now deploy my imagination?
When you're at table, I shall bear the golden basin,
I'll hold your rings, that on those joyful days
Your hands may be refreshed, as I am by your gaze.

THE EMPEROR

I feel too serious for ready celebration,
But, be it so, as a joyful inauguration!
(To the Third.)

I make you High-Steward! Oversee the chase,

The poultry yard, and such, around the place:
Give me the finest dishes, choice and rare,
In their right month, and carefully prepared.

THE HIGH-STEWARD

Strict fast will be my pleasant punishment,
Till I can serve the tastiest refreshment.
Your kitchen staff will join with me to bring
The distant near, and make the year take wing.
Yet early and rare won't stimulate your fires,
Simple and strong, is what your taste desires.

THE EMPEROR (To the Fourth.)

Since planning feasts is unavoidable here,
Young hero, I'll give you my cup to bear.
High-Cupbearer, take care those cellars of mine
Are richly filled with casks of vintage wine.
Be temperate yourself: don't lose your reason
In the wild delight of momentary temptation!

THE HIGH-CUPBEARER

The young,
If you trust in them, my Prince,
Grow to manhood, almost before you'd notice.
I'll take my place too at your noble feast:
And load the imperial table with all that's best,
With every kind of vessel, in silver and gold,
But the handsomest of all for you I'll hold:
A clear Venetian glass, where joy is waiting,
That strengthens the taste, without intoxicating.
One often trusts too much in such a treasure:
But your restraint, Lord, will protect your pleasure.

THE EMPEROR

What I bestow on you at this grave moment,
You hear, in confidence, has my true intent.
The Emperor's word is great, his gift is sure,
But to be enacted it needs his signature,
His noble mark. Here's the right man I see
True to his time, to complete the formality.
The Archbishop and High-Chancellor enters.
If the arch can trust the keystone's part,
Then it's raised securely, with lasting art.
You see four Princes here! And I've explained
How my House and Court must be sustained.
Now, what the empire holds within its bounds
Is placed, with weight and power, in your hands.
You'll outshine all others in your estates:
So I've extended your walls and gates,
With the lost possessions of our enemy.
I award you fine lands, for your loyalty.
Together with the right, in due course,
To buy, exchange, or add to them by force:
Then, be it known, I grant you unhindered use –
Of what belongs to you, the landlord's dues.
When you as judges speak your final thought,
No appeal shall be heard by a higher court.
Then taxes, levies, rents, and tolls and fees,
Are yours: of mines, mints, salt the royalties.
And to display my gratitude completely,
I've raised you all to highest majesty.

THE ARCHBISHOP

On behalf of us all I give our deepest thanks to you!
You make us strong and sure: increasing your power too.

THE EMPEROR

To you five, still higher favours will I give.
I live for my empire, and I still wish to live:
Yet ancient, noble ties draw the careful thinker
From present things to those that follow after.
I too, in time, must leave all I still hold dear,
It's your duty then to name a new ruler, here.
At our holy altar, crown and raise him high:
What war begins ends peacefully, by and by.

THE HIGH-CHANCELLOR

With pride at heart,
Yet humble in gesture, too,
We, the Earth's noblest princes bow to you.
So long as blood fills our loyal veins, then still
Are we the body that obeys your every will.

THE EMPEROR

Now, to conclude,
Let everything we've enacted
Be set down for the future, as we've contracted.
As Lords you hold your possessions, free in fact,
With this condition, that they remain intact.
And what you have from us, whatever else is won,
Shall descend in due measure to the eldest son.

THE HIGH-CHANCELLOR

I'll entrust it to parchment straight away,
This weightiest statute to bless us, and the state:
The Chancery will provide fair copy, and reveal
You as confirmed, my Lords, by sign and seal.

THE EMPEROR

And so I dismiss you that you may deliberate

Together, concerning this great day for our state.

The Secular Princes exit.

THE ARCHBISHOP

The Chancellor leaves, the Bishop remains here,

With this grave warning to offer in your ear.

His paternal heart, anxiously, fears for you.

THE EMPEROR

Speak, in this happy hour, what care's on view?

THE ARCHBISHOP

With what bitter pain I find that even at this hour,

Your hallowed head still toys with Satan's power!

True, you've secured the throne now, yet it seems,

Sadly, scorning God, and the Pope's great schemes.

When he learns of it, swift punishment he'll bring,

And destroy your sinful realm with holy lightning.

He's not forgotten how, at that earlier time,

Of coronation, you freed the wizard: in crime.

With your diadem, you injured Christianity,

Striking a cursed head with the first act of mercy.

Now beat your breast and from your guilty measure,

Give back to the holy shrine a little treasure:

You, taught humility, devote to pious use, and good,

The spacious stretch of hills where your tent stood.

Where evil spirits gathered for your protection,

And the Prince of Liars secured your attention:

Grant mount and forest deep, as far as they extend,

And heights, the green slopes adorn, without end.

Clear lakes rich in fish, countless streams that flow,

Winding swiftly, that rush to the valleys below:

Then the broad vale itself, meadow, lawn and hollow:

Show your remorse: gain the mercy that must follow.

THE EMPEROR

I'm deeply fearful of this, my heavy sin:

Yourself, mark out the borders of the scheme.

THE ARCHBISHOP

First then the place

Profaned by such sinfulness,

Dedicate that to the service of heavenliness.

Thick walls rise quickly, at the mind's desire,

Already the sun's dawn glance lights the choir,

The growing building takes the cross's structure,

The nave long and high, a delight to each believer:

Already as they press eagerly through the doors,

A first peal rings through hills, down valley floors,

From the high tower, that's striving towards heaven,

The penitent comes, to whom new life is given.

That day of consecration – may it be soon! –

When your presence grants the greatest boon.

THE EMPEROR

Let the pious mind proclaim so great an action,

In praising the Lord, I'll achieve my expiation.

Enough! I already feel my mind's exaltation.

THE ARCHBISHOP

As Chancellor

I require a formal proclamation.

THE EMPEROR

A formal document: lay that before me,

I'll be pleased to sign whatever the Church agrees.

THE ARCHBISHOP (Has taken leave, but turns back at the door.)

At the same time devote the total income of the land,

As it arises, tithes, taxes, levies, to the work on hand,
Forever. It needs to be maintained, fairly,
And its careful upkeep will cost us dearly.
From all that plunder, grant us a measure of gold,
To build it quickly there, in that desert fold.
Moreover we'll need, I can't help mentioning,
Timber from far off, lime, slate, and such things.
Exhorted from the pulpit, the folk will haul it,
The Church will bless the man who learns to serve it.
(He exits.)

THE EMPEROR

The sin with which my soul is heavy, is full sore:
Wretched Sorcerers have wounded me, once more.

THE ARCHBISHOP (Returning, yet again, and bowing deeply.)

Pardon, my Lord! The Imperial shore was given
To that disreputable man, I'll excommunicate him,
Unless you in penitence grant the Church, there, too,
Its tithes, and gifts, and taxes: the whole of its revenue.

THE EMPEROR (In a bad humour.)

That land doesn't exist, it lies there under the sea.

THE ARCHBISHOP

Who's patient,

And is right, his time is yet to be.

For us, your word must wait on one man's desire.

(He exits.)

THE EMPEROR (Alone.)

I might as well sign away the whole wide empire.

PART II ACT V SCENE I: OPEN COUNTRY

THE WANDERER

Yes! Here are the dusky lindens,
Standing round, in mighty age.
And here am I, returning to them,
After so long a pilgrimage!
It still appears the same old place:
Here's the hut that sheltered me,
When the storm-uplifted wave,
Hurled me shore-wards from the sea!
My hosts are those I would bless,
A brave, a hospitable pair,
Who if I meet them, I confess,
Must already be white haired.
Ah! They were pious people!
Shall I call, or knock? – Greetings,
If, as open-hearted, you still
Enjoy good luck, in meetings!

BAUCIS (A little woman, very aged.)

Gentle stranger! Quietly, quietly!
Peace! Let my husband rest!
Long sleep lends the elderly,
Little time to work, at best.

THE WANDERER

Tell me, Mother: are you that wife
To whom thanks should be given:
Who brought a young man back to life,
When wife and husband worked as one?
Are you that Baucis who tirelessly
Restored my almost-vanished breath?

Her husband appears.

Are you that Philemon, who bravely
Saved my wealth from watery death?

Your swiftly burning fire,

Your silvery sounding bell,

In chance, dread and dire,

Was the outcome that befell.

And now let me walk about,

And view the boundless ocean:

Let me kneel, and be devout:

Mind troubled with emotion.

(He walks on, over the downs.)

PHILEMON (To Baucis.)

Hurry now, and lay the table,

Underneath the garden trees.

Let him go: as in the fable,

He'll not credit what he sees.

(He follows, and stands beside the Wanderer.)

Where wave on wave, foaming wildly,

Savagely mistreated you,

See a garden planted, widely,

See the Paradisial view.

I was too old to seize the day,

Unfit to work as long ago:

And while my powers ebbed away,

The tide extended its wide flow.

Clever Lords set their bold servants

Digging ditches, building dikes,

To gain the mastery of ocean,

Diminishing its natural rights.

See green meadow bordering meadow,
Field and garden, wood and town. –
But it's time to eat, so follow,
Sunset is approaching now.
See the sails, far away there,
Seeking port before the night.
The birds fly homeward through the air:
Their harbour too heaves in sight.
So gaze then, at the whole horizon,
Where the blue sea used to flow,
Right and left there, to your vision,
Densely peopled space below.

PART II ACT V SCENE II: IN THE LITTLE GARDEN

The three of them at table.

BAUCIS (To the stranger.)

Are you dumb? And will you lift
Not a morsel to your mouth?

PHILEMON

He wants to comprehend the gift:
Tell him, freely then: speak out.

BAUCIS

Well! It was a marvel, really!
It troubles me to this day:
Then its whole nature, surely,
Was peculiar, in its way.

PHILEMON

Is the Emperor, then, at fault,

Who granted him the land?
Didn't a herald make his halt,
Crying out what was planned?
Not far away there, on the dunes,
The first bold step was made,
Tents, huts! – And on the downs,
A palace, quickly raised.

BAUCIS

For days, work rumbled on in vain,
Pick and shovel, blow on blow:
Where the night's fires flamed,
Next day a dam would follow.
Human blood was forced to flow,
At night, rose the sound of pain:
The seaward floating fiery glow
Was a canal, come dawn again.
He's a godless man: he'd steal
Our hut, and our few acres:
But like subjects we must kneel,
When we boast such neighbours.

PHILEMON

Yet he's offered us another
Holding, on his new-won land!

BAUCIS

Never trust what's built on water,
On the heights maintain your stand.

PHILEMON

Let's make our way to the chapel,
To watch the last glow of light,
Kneel, pray, and sound the bell,

And trust in God's ancient might!

PART II ACT V SCENE III: THE PALACE

Spacious pleasure-gardens: a broad straight canal. Faust in extreme old age,
walking about, thoughtfully.

LYNCEUS, THE WARDER (Through a speaking trumpet.)

The sun is fading, the last boats
Sail swiftly to the harbour here.
One large vessel gently floats,
Down the canal: and draws near.
The bright flags flutter merrily,
The masts are trimmed, in time:
The boatmen all praise you gladly,
Fortune celebrates your prime.
The little bell on the dunes rings out.

FAUST (Startled.)

Accursed ringing! Wounding me
With shame: a treacherous blow:
My realm's laid out there, endlessly,
But, at my back, this vexes so,
Proclaiming, with its jealous sound:
My great estate is less than fine,
The old hut, all the trees around,
The crumbling chapel, are not mine.
And even if I wished to rest there,
A strange shadow makes me shudder,
It's a thorn in my eye, and deeper:
Oh! Would I were somewhere other!

THE WARDER (From above.)

The boat is sailing, brightly dressed,
Towards us, on the evening breeze!
Heaped, with boxes, sacks and chests,
From its journey on the seas!

(A splendid boat, richly and brightly loaded with foreign goods.
Mephistopheles. The Three Mighty Warriors).

CHORUS

Here we land,
Already, here.
Hail to our Lord,
Our patron dear!
They disembark: the goods are unloaded.

MEPHISTOPHELES

We've proven ourselves in every way,
Pleased, if we win our patron's praise.
We took two ships when we sailed before
With twenty ships we dock, once more.
What we've achieved, each fine thing,
You'll see from the cargo that we bring.
The ocean's freedom frees the mind
There all thought is left behind!
You only need a handy grip,
You catch a fish, or take a ship,
And once you're lord of all three,
The fourth one's tackled easily:
The fifth one's in an evil plight,
You have the might, and so the right.
You wonder what, and never how.
I know a little of navigation:
War, trade, and piracy, allow,

As three in one, no separation.

THE THREE MIGHTY WARRIORS

No thanks for us!

No thanks at all!

As if we've brought

A stench, that's all.

He pulls a

Nasty face again:

These royal goods

Don't please him then.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Don't expect more

Pay for it!

What you've had

Is what you get.

THE WARRIORS

That was only

To pass the time:

We want an equal

Share in crime.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Then first set out in

Hall on hall,

The costly treasures,

One and all!

And coming to

The splendid show,

He'll think it all the

More, you know,

He won't be mean,

With you, at least,
He'll give the fleet,
Feast on feast.
Tomorrow motley birds attend,
I want to take good care of them.
The cargo is removed.

(To Faust.)

This splendid fortune you embrace
With wrinkled brow, and gloomy face!
Your noble wisdom has been crowned,
Sea's reconciled with solid ground:
From the shore, on swifter track,
The sea wills out the ship, and back:
So speak, that here, from your spire,
Your arms might grip the world entire.
From this place the trench was cut,
Here stood the first wooden hut:
A little ditch was traced from here,
Where now vessels' wakes appear.
Your servants' toil, your thought so wise,
Have won the Earth and Ocean's prize.
From here on –

FAUST

– that accursed here!
That always brings me wretched fear,
To you who are so clever, I say it,
It gives my heart sting on sting,
It's impossible for me to bear it.
I'm ashamed to even speak the thing.
The old ones up there should yield,

I want the limes as my retreat,
The least tree in another's field,
Detracts from my whole estate.
There, to stand and look around,
I'll build a frame from bough to bough,
My gaze revealing, under the sun,
A view of everything I've done,
Overseeing, as the eye falls on it,
A masterpiece of the human spirit,
Forging with intelligence,
A wider human residence.
That's the worst suffering can bring,
Being rich, to feel we lack something.
The bell's chime, the lindens' breeze,
Like tombs in churchyards stifle me.
The exercise of my all-conquering will
Is shattered in the sand, here, and lies still.
How can I drive it from my nature!
The bell peals, and I'm an angry creature.

MEPHISTOPHELES

It's natural! Intense frustration
Drives a man to desperation.
Who doubts it! That clang I fear
Falls cruelly on a noble ear.
And that wretched bing-bang-bong,
Through the clear evening sky, that gong,
Is joined to every chance event,
From first bath to last interment.
As if between its bing and bong
Life's a dream, and then is gone.

FAUST

Such obstinacy and opposition
Diminishes the noblest position,
Until in endless pain, one must
Grow deeply weary of being just.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Why bother yourself so much about them?
Shouldn't you long ago have colonised them?

FAUST

Then go and push them aside for me! –
You know the land, with my approval,
Set aside for the old folks removal.

MEPHISTOPHELES

We'll take them up, and set them down,
They'll stand, once more: I'll be bound:
When they've survived a little force,
They'll be reconciled to it, of course.

(He whistles shrilly.)

Come: perform your Lord's command!
And tomorrow let the feast be planned.

THE THREE WARRIORS

This old Lord received us badly,
A feast now is our right: believe me.

MEPHISTOPHELES (To the audience.)

And here we see, as long ago
Naboth's vineyard still on show.

PART II ACT V SCENE IV: DEAD OF NIGHT

LYNCEUS, THE WARDER (Singing on the watch-tower of the palace.)

For seeing, I'm born,
For watching, employed,
To the tower, I'm sworn,
While the world, I enjoy.

I gaze at the far,
I stare at the near,
The moon and the star,
The forest and deer:
The eternally lovely
Adornment, I view,
And as it delights me
I delight myself too.

You, fortunate eyes,
All you've seen, there,
Let it be as it may,
Yet it was so fair!

(Pause.)

I'm not positioned here, on high,
Just for my own enjoyment:
What horror, meant to terrify,
Threatens from the firmament!
I see sparks of fire gushing
Through the lindens' double night,
Fanned by the wind's rushing,
Ever stronger grows the light.
Ah! Within, the hut is burning,
Damp and mossy though it stand:
Swift help, in this direction turning,
Is needed, yet no aid's to hand.

Ah! The pious old couple,
So careful ever of the fire,
Made a prey to smoke, to stifle,
On this dreadful pyre!
The flame burns on: glowing red,
It's now a blackened mossy pile:
If only those good folk are rescued,
From those fires of hell, run wild!
A bright tongue of lightning heaves,
Through the branches, through the leaves:
Breaking, snapping, catching swiftly,
Withered branches flicker, glow.
Why have I such powers to see!
Why are mine the eyes that know!
The little chapel now collapses,
With the falling branches' weight.
Already with bright snakelike flashes,
The treetops, gripped, meet their fate.
Glowing crimson, to their hollow
Roots, the trunks now burn with ease. –
A long pause. Chant.
What used to please my eyes, below,
Has vanished with the centuries.
FAUST (On the balcony, towards the downs.)
What whining song is that, above?
Too late its word and tone reach me.
The watchman wails: yes, I'm moved:
Annoyed by this impatient deed.
But let the lime-trees be erased,
A horror now of half-burnt timber,

A watchtower can soon be raised,
To gaze around at boundless splendour.
From there I'll see my new creation,
One set aside for that old pair: at least,
They'll feel benign consideration,
Enjoying their last days in peace.

MEPHISTOPHELES AND THE THREE WARRIORS (Below.)

Here we come, and at the double:
Pardon us! We've caused you trouble.
We knocked, and knocked on the door,
But it seemed locked for evermore:
We rattled it, and shook it too,
Until the planks broke in two:
We called aloud, and threatened, then,
But there was no reply, again.
And as happens in such cases,
They heard nothing, hid their faces:
But we commenced without delay
To drive the stubborn folk away.
That pair knew scant anxiety,
They died of terror, peacefully.
A stranger, who was hiding there,
And wished to fight, we tried to scare.
But in the fast and furious bout,
From the coals that lay about,
The straw took fire. Now all three,
In that one pyre, burn merrily.

FAUST

Were you deaf to what I said?
I wanted them moved, not dead.

This mindless, and savage blow,
Earns my curse: share it, and go!

CHORUS

The ancient proverb says of course:
Yield willingly to a greater force!
While if you're bold and opt for strife,
You'll stake your house, and home – and life.
They exit.

FAUST (On the balcony.)

Stars hide their faces, and their glow,
The fire sinks, and flickers low:
A moist breeze fans the dying ember,
Bringing smoke and vapour closer.
Quickly said, too quickly done, I fear! –
Now, what hovers like a shadow, here?

PART II ACT V SCENE V: MIDNIGHT

(Four Grey Women enter.)

THE FIRST

I am called Want.

THE SECOND

I am called Guilt.

THE THIRD

I am called Care.

THE FOURTH

Necessity, I.

THREE TOGETHER (Want, Guilt and Necessity)

The door is shut tight, and we cannot get in:

The owner is rich: he won't have us within.

WANT

I shrink to a shadow.

GUILT

To emptiest space.

NEED

The wealthy from me turn their pampered face.

CARE

Sisters, you can't enter, daren't enter there.

But, through the keyhole now, always slips, Care.

(Care disappears.)

WANT

You, my Grey Sisters, take your flight too.

GUILT

Close by your side, I come following you.

NECESSITY

Close at your heels is Necessity's breath.

THE THREE

The clouds there are moving, and cover the stars!

Behind us, behind us! From far, oh, from far,

He's coming, our Brother, he's coming, he's – Death.

FAUST (In the Palace.)

I saw four: but only three went away:

I caught no meaning from the words they say.

It sounded as if I heard – 'Necessity's breath',

And then a gloomy rhyming word, like – 'Death'.

It rang hollow, ghostly, subdued, to me.

Even now I've not won my liberty.

If I could banish Sorcery from my track,

Unlearn the magic-spells that draw me back,

And stand before you, Nature, as mere Man,
It would be worth the pain of being Human.
So was I, a seeker in the darkness,
Cursing both self and world, in wickedness.
Now the air is filled with phantom shapes,
It's hard to see how anyone escapes.
Though day may smile on us with rational gleams,
The night entwines us in a web of dreams:
We come happily from the fields of youth,
A bird croaks: what? Misfortune: is our truth.
Cloaked with superstitions, soon and late:
It's wedded to us, warns us: shows our fate.
And so, alone, intimidated, we stand.
The door creaks, yet no one is at hand.

(Anxiously.)

Is anyone there?

CARE

The answer must be, yes!

FAUST

And you, who then are you?

CARE

I am your guest.

FAUST

Be gone!

CARE

I am here, in my proper place.

FAUST (First angered, then composed, addressing himself.)

Take care: of magic spells show not a trace.

CARE

Though the ear choose not to hear,

In the heart I echo, clear:
Savage power I exercise,
Transformed I am, to mortal eyes.
On the land, and on the ocean,
Evermore the dread companion,
Always found, and never sought,
Praised, as well as cursed, in thought. –
Have you yourself not known Care?

FAUST

I sped through the World that's there:
Gripped by the hair every appetite,
And let go those that failed to delight,
Let those fly that quite escaped me.
I've desired, achieved my course,
Desired again, and so, with force,
Stormed through life: first powerfully,
But wisely now: and thoughtfully.
Earth's sphere's familiar enough to me,
The view beyond is barred eternally:
The fool who sets his sights up there,
Creates his own likeness in the air!
Let him stand, and look around him well:
This world means something to the capable.
Why does he need to roam eternity!
Let him grasp what is firm reality.
So let him wander down his earthly day:
And if ghosts haunt him, go on his way,
Find joy and suffering in striding on,
Dissatisfied with every hour that's gone.

CARE

When of man I take possession,
Then his whole world is lessened:
Endless gloom meets his eyes,
No more suns will set or rise,
Though intact, to outer sense,
He lives in the dark, intense,
Never knowing how to measure
Any portion of his treasure.
Good and ill are merely chance,
He starves, food in his hands:
Be it joy or be it sorrow
He delays it till tomorrow,
Waiting for the future, ever,
Finding his fulfilment, never.

FAUST

Be gone! And don't come near me!
Such nonsense I'll not understand.
Away, with your evil litany,
Sent to confuse the cleverest man!

CARE

Shall he come, or shall he go?
All decision is denied him:
In the middle of the road,
He staggers, feeling round him.
He's ever more deeply lost,
Seeing everything star-crossed,
Wearies himself and all the rest,
Stifles as he holds his breath:
Lifeless, but not yet gone under,
Resists despair or surrender.

So, with an incessant rolling,
A painful end, and hard going,
Now free, and now constrained,
In half sleep, poorly entertained,
Confine him in a little space:
Prepare him for Hell's other place.

FAUST

Unholy spectre! So you hand our race
To the ravages of a thousand devils:
Even transform our worthless days
To a wretched knot of entangling evils.
It's hard I know to free oneself from Demons,
The strong spirit-bonds are not lightly broken:
And yet, Care, I'll not recognise you, nor even,
That creeping power of yours, by any token.

CARE

Feel it now, as on the wind,
I, and my curse, depart, again.
Lifelong, all you men are blind,
Now, Faust, be so to the end!

(She breathes in his face, and departs.)

FAUST (Now blind.)

The night seems deeper all around me,
Only within me is there gleaming light:
I must finish what I've done, and hurry,
The master's word alone declares what's right.
Up from your beds, you slaves! Man on man!
Reveal the daring of my favoured plan.
Seize the tools: on with pick and spade!
Let the end-result be now displayed.

Strict order, and swift industry
Then the finest prize we'll see:
And so the greatest work may stand,
One mind equal to a thousand hands.

**PART II ACT V SCENE VI: THE GREAT OUTER COURT OF THE
PALACE**

Torches.

MEPHISTOPHELES (In advance, as Overseer.)

Come on! Come on! In here, in here!

Quivering spirits of the dead,

All you patchwork semi-natures,

Sinew, bone, and tendon wed.

THE SPIRITS OF THE DEAD (Lemures, in Chorus.)

Swiftly now we are on hand

With half an impression,

That it concerns a tract of land,

Of which we'll gain possession.

Pointed stakes with us appear,

Chains to measure ground on:

But why you've called us here

Is something we've forgotten.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Artistic effort's not the prize:

Carry it out in your own manner!

Lay the longest one of you lengthwise,

Then pile the turf on him, you others.

Do as they once did for our fathers there,

Dig out a somewhat lengthened square!

Gone from a palace to a narrow place:

It's still as stupid an end for man to face.

THE SPIRITS OF THE DEAD (Digging with Mocking gestures.)

When I was young and lived and loved,

I thought it was very sweet:

To happy sounds, and cheerful steps,

I lifted up my feet.

Now treacherous old age has clawed

Me with his crutch, since when

I stumble at the grave's wide door,

Why do they leave it open!

FAUST (Comes from the Palace, groping his way past the doorposts.)

How the clattering of shovels cheers me!

It's the crews still labouring on,

Till earth is reconciled to man,

The waves accept their boundaries,

And ocean's bound with iron bands.

MEPHISTOPHELES (Aside.)

And yet with all your walls and dams

You're merely dancing to our tune:

Since you prepare for our Neptune,

The Water-demon, one vast feast.

You'll be lost in every way –

The elements are ours, today,

And ruin comes on running feet.

FAUST

Overseer!

MEPHISTOPHELES

Here!

FAUST

Any way you can
Bring crowds of labourers together,
Spurred by force or hope of pleasure,
By pay, enticement or press-gang!
Report to me on progress every day,
The depth of earth and gravel dug away.

MEPHISTOPHELES (Half-aloud.)

Reporting it to me the word they gave,
Was not quite gravel, it was more like – grave.

FAUST

A swamp lies there below the hill,
Infecting everything I've done:
My last and greatest act of will
Succeeds when that foul pool is gone.
Let me make room for many a million,
Not wholly secure, but free to work on.
Green fertile fields, where men and herds
May gain swift comfort from the new-made earth.
Quickly settled in those hills' embrace,
Piled high by a brave, industrious race.
And in the centre here, a Paradise,
Whose boundaries hold back the raging tide,
And though it gnaws to enter in by force,
The common urge unites to halt its course.
Yes, I've surrendered to this thought's insistence,
The last word Wisdom ever has to say:
He only earns his Freedom and Existence,
Who's forced to win them freshly every day.
Childhood, manhood, age's vigorous years,
Surrounded by dangers, they'll spend here.

I wish to gaze again on such a land,
Free earth: where a free race, in freedom, stand.

Then, to the Moment I'd dare say:

'Stay a while! You are so lovely!'

Through aeons, then, never to fade away

This path of mine through all that's earthly. –

Anticipating, here, its deep enjoyment,

Now I savour it, that highest moment.

(Faust sinks back, the spirits of the dead take him and lay him on the ground).

MEPHISTOPHELES

No bliss satisfied him, no enjoyment,

And so he tried to catch at shifting forms:

The last, the worst, the emptiest of moments,

He wished to hold at last in his arms.

Though against me he tried to stand,

Time is master: age lies on the sand.

The clock stands still –

CHORUS

Stands still! As midnight: silent.

The hand moves.

MEPHISTOPHELES

It falls, and all is spent.

CHORUS

It's past.

MEPHISTOPHELES

Past! A stupid word.

Then, why?

Past, and pure nothing, complete monotony!

What use is this eternal creation!

Creating, to achieve annihilation!
‘There, it’s past!’ What’s to read in it?
It’s just the same as if it never lived,
Yet chases round in circles, as if it did.
I’d prefer to have the everlasting void.
Burial.

A SPIRIT OF THE DEAD (Solo.)

Who’s built the house so badly,
With shovel and with spade?

SPIRITS OF THE DEAD (Chorus.)

For you dull guest, in hempen dress,
It was all too carefully made.

A SPIRIT OF THE DEAD (Solo.)

Who’s decked the hall so badly?
Where now the table and chairs?

SPIRITS OF THE DEAD (Chorus.)

Borrowed for a little while:
There are many creditors.

MEPHISTOPHELES

The body’s here: if the spirit tries to fly,
I’ll show it my blood-signed title swiftly:
Yet men have found so many methods, sadly,
To cheat the Devil of their souls, or try.

We carry on the same old way,
New ones aren’t recommended:
I used to work alone: today
I have to use the help extended.
And everything goes badly too!
Ancient right, traditional use,
One can’t rely on those much longer.

At the last breath, once, the soul was out,
I slipped by, and like the swiftest mouse,
Caught her! Held her fast, my claws were stronger.
Now she lingers, won't leave the gloomy place,
The foul corpse's hideous house, until
The elements force her, in hatred still,
And drive her out at last, in disgrace.
And though the hour and minute plague me,
'When', 'how' and 'where', still the tiresome query:
Old Death has lost his ancient power,
'Whether' is doubtful, never mind the hour:
Often, with lust, I saw the rigid frame
It was a sham: it stirred, and rose again.
(He makes fantastic, whirling conjuring gestures.)
Now quick! Redouble your paces, too,
You gentlemen, straight or twisted-horned,
The old Devil's grain and kernel born,
And bring Hell's jaws along with you.
True Hell has many jaws! Yes, many!
To swallow according to standing and worth:
However in this last game of all we're ready
To be a little less considerate, henceforth.
The fearful jaws of Hell open on the left.
The tusks yawn wide: the jaws of the abyss,
Flow with raging flames, in fury,
And in the boiling background hiss,
I see the eternal glow of the fiery city.
The crimson tide breaks against the teeth,
The damned in hope of help swim through:
But the vast hyena mangles them beneath,

And sends them to new anguish in the brew.
There are many corners to discover,
So many horrors in such little room!
You've done quite well at frightening sinners,
But still they think it dream, deceit, untrue.
(To the fat devils with short straight horns.)
Now, you fat-bellied rascals with fiery cheeks!
You've grown that way eating hellish sulphur:
Stumpy, short, with thick immoveable necks!
Watch below, for any glow of phosphor:
That's the soul, Psyche with the wings,
Pluck them off and she's a nasty worm:
I'll stamp her with my signature, first thing,
Then off with her to the whirling fiery storm!
Pass on towards the nether regions,
You barrels, since all that's your duty:
Whether she lives there, that's the notion,
None know with any accuracy.
She'll gladly lodge in the navel –
Lest she slip away from there, be careful.
(To the lean devils with long crooked horns.)
You, clowns, you giant flying creatures,
Grasp at the air: grant yourselves no rest!
Your strong arms and sharp-clawed features,
Are sure to hold the fluttering fugitive fast.
She's stuck there inside her ancient house,
And Spirit will always look for a way out.
Glory from above, on the right.

THE HEAVENLY HOST

Messengers follow

Heavenly kin, oh,
In leisurely flight:
Sin they forgive,
Dust they make live:
The friendship they show
To Nature below,
Floating they'll give,
As they slowly alight!

MEPHISTOPHELES

I hear discords, all that nasty jingling,
Coming from up there, with unwelcome day:
It's always that childish, girlish bungling,
That pious taste loves to hear and play.
You know how we in despicable moments,
Considered the ruin of the human race:
But the most shameful of compliments,
Is that their prayers are a worse disgrace.
These dandies come, the hypocrites:
They've snatched a heap of souls away,
Use our own weapons too to do it:
They're Devils in disguise, I'd say.
To lose this one is everlasting shame:
On to the grave, and renew your claim!

THE CHOIR OF ANGELS (Scattering roses.)

Roses, you dazzling ones,
Balsam you're sending us,
Floating and trembling,
Secretly quickening,
Branches inspiring us,
Buds sweetly firing us,

Hasten to bloom!
Crimson and green, here
Springtime assume!
Carry the sleeper
To Paradise' room.

MEPHISTOPHELES (To the devils.)

Why duck and dive? Is that Hell's custom?
Stand still, and let them do their scattering.
Every gawk in place, and face them!
They think with such a flowery smattering,
To cool the heat of devils' chattering:
At your breath it melts and shrinks, again.
Now blow, you blowers! – Enough, enough!
Your bubbling's faded all that stuff. –
Not so fiercely! Close your mouths and noses!
Ah, now you've been too violent with the roses,
Where's the moderation you should have learnt?
They're not just shrivelling: they're burning, burnt!
They float about in flames, poisonous, bright:
Avoid them: close together, huddle tight! –
Your power's waning! And your courage too!
The devils sniff the strange, seductive brew.

THE CHOIR OF ANGELS

Blossoms, of joyfulness,
Flames, of true happiness,
Love, they radiate,
Bliss, they now create,
As the heart may.
Words that are truest,
Air of the clearest,

Gathering round us

Eternal day!

MEPHISTOPHELES

O, curses! O shower of shame that's shed!

Each Satan's standing on his head,

The Fatties spin like tops, in curves,

And plunge arse-upwards into Hell.

Go find the hot baths you deserve!

While at my post I'll stand here still. –

(He beats at the hovering roses.)

Will-o'-the wisps, be gone! Though you burn bright,

Snatched at, in the end, you're disgusting shite.

Why'd you keep fluttering here? Buzz off! –

They stick like tar and sulphur: filthy stuff.

THE CHOIR OF ANGELS

What is not part of you,

You need not share it:

What inwardly troubles you,

You need not bear it.

Should it close in, with force,

We will deflect its course.

Only the loving, Love

Guides to its source!

MEPHISTOPHELES

My head and heart are burnt: my liver's burnt,

By a devilish element!

Sharper than the fires of Hell! –

That's what makes you cry, so, as well,

You, the unlucky in love! Disdained,

Heads turned to the beloved, strained.

Mine, too! What's twisted it to one side?
Are they and I not sworn to eternal strife?
I, once fiercely hostile to their very sight.
Has an alien force pierced me through and through?
I gladly gaze at them, loveliest of youths:
What holds me back from cursing at the light? –
And if I let myself be seduced,
Who'll play the fool in future?
These airy fellows that I hate, too,
How lovely to me now they all appear! –
You sweet children, tell me then:
Aren't you part of Lucifer's race?
You're so nice I'd like to kiss you, and again,
It feels as if this is your proper place.
It feels as comfortable, as natural to me,
As if we'd met a thousand times before:
So surreptitiously catlike, so lustfully:
The loveliness with each glance quickens more.
Oh, come nearer: Oh, only glance at me!

THE ANGELS

We're here already, why so cautiously?
We are close, and, if you can, then stay!
(The Angels come forward and occupy the whole space.)

MEPHISTOPHELES (Crowded into the proscenium.)

You scorn us, the spirits of the damned,
Yet you're of the true Sorcerers' brand:
You lead both man and wife astray. –
What wretched luck, and dire!
Is this Love's own element?
My whole body's bathed in fire,

I scarcely feel, my head's so burnt. –
You float to and fro, sink down a while,
Move your sweet limbs with earthly guile:
True, a grave expression suits you well,
But I'd still like to see you smile a little!
That would be an eternal delight to me.
Like the lovers' mutual glance, you see:
A simper round the mouth, is how it's done,
You, the tall lad, you could make me love you,
The priest's pose doesn't really suit you,
So show a little lust, and look hereon!
You could be more modestly naked too,
That robe's long hem, so demure in its rising –
They turn away – and seen from the rear view –
Those rascals now are really appetising!

THE CHOIR OF ANGELS

You, loving fires,
Brighter, now, fanned,
Heal the damned,
With Truth, the higher!
Let them be freed
From evil indeed,
Blissfully grace,
The eternal embrace.

MEPHISTOPHELES (Collecting himself.)

What's happening to me! – Like Job, in fact
All boils: so I scare myself, and yet I've won
As well, since, now my inspection's done,
And my trust in self and tribe's well placed,
The Devil's noble bits appear intact,

This love-bewitchment's only on the surface:

The wretched flames already smother,

And, as is right, I curse you all together!

THE CHOIR OF ANGELS

Pure incandescence!

Whom its flames bless,

Blissful with goodness,

Is their existence.

Gathered together,

Rise now, and praise!

Spirit can breathe here,

In purer waves!

(They rise, carrying away the immortal part of Faust.)

MEPHISTOPHELES (Looking round him.)

How then? – Where did they vanish to?

You took me by surprise, you adolescents.

Now with what they've salvaged from the tomb,

As their own prize, they've flown off to heaven:

They've stolen a great, a unique treasure:

That noble soul, mortgaged to my pleasure,

They've snatched it away, with cunning even.

But whom could I complain to, anyway?

Who'd grant me my well-earned right?

You've been swindled in your old age,

You've deserved it, this wretched slight.

At great expense, shameful! And it's gone:

I've mishandled it all disgracefully,

A common lust, an absurd passion,

Swayed the hardened devil foolishly.

And if Experience was in a mess,

With all these childish, stupid things,
It was, in truth, no trivial Foolishness,
That took possession of him in the end.

**PART II ACT V SCENE VII: MOUNTAIN GORGES, FOREST, ROCK,
DESERT**

Holy Hermits, divided in ascending planes, posted among the ravines.

CHORUS AND ECHO

Forests, they wave around,
Over them, cliffs bear down,
Roots cling to rocky ground,
Trunk upon trunk is bound,
Wave after wave sprays up,
Deep caves protecting us.
Lions prowl silently,
Round us, still friendly,
Honouring sacred space,
Love's holy hiding place.

PATER ECSTATICUS (Hovering up and down.)

Eternal, fire of bliss,
Glow of love's bond this is,
Pain in the heart, seething,
Rapture divine, foaming.
Arrows, come, piercing me,
Spears, compelling me,
Clubs, you may shatter me,
Lightning may flash through me!
So passes the nullity
Of all unreality,

And from the lasting star
Shines Love's eternal core.
PATER PROFUNDIS (At a lower level.)
As this rocky abyss at my feet,
Rests on a deeper abyss,
As a thousand glittering streams meet
In the foaming flood's downward hiss,
As with its own strong impulse, above,
The tree lifts skywards in the air:
Even so all-powerful love,
Creates all things, in its care.
Around me there's a savage roar,
As if the rocks and forests sway,
Yet full of love the waters pour,
Rushing bountifully away,
Sent to irrigate the valley here:
The lightning that flashed down,
Must purify the atmosphere,
With poisonous vapours bound –
They are love's messengers, they tell
Of what creates eternally around us.
May it inflame me inwardly, as well,
Since my spirit, cold and confounded,
Torments itself, bound in the dull senses,
As sharp-toothed fetters' agonising art.
Oh, God! Calm my thoughts, pacify us,
And bring light to my needy heart!
PATER SERAPHICUS (In the middle regions.)
What a mist of morning hovers
Through the pine-trees' swaying hair!

Can I guess what it might cover?

A crowd of spirits live there.

CHOIR OF SACRED YOUNG BOYS

Tell us, Father, where we wander,

Tell us, Kind One, who we are?

We are happy: Being's tender

To all who are, all who are.

PATER SERAPHICUS

Young boys! Born at midnight's hour,

Mind and spirit half-unveiled,

For your parents, a lost dower,

For the angels, profit gained.

You can feel that one who loves

Is near to you, so come to me:

Yet of earthly ways and moves,

You bear no traces, happily.

Rise into my eyes, those known

Organs of the earthly life,

You can use them as your own,

Gaze at all the spaces wide!

(He absorbs them into himself.)

Those are trees: those are cliffs,

A stream of water, rushing round,

With gigantic leaps it lifts,

Shortening its journey down.

THE YOUNG BOYS (From within him.)

That's indeed a mighty vision,

But it's gloomy here, you know,

With fear and dread we're all shaken.

Father, Kind one, let us go!

PATER SERAPHICUS

Rise upwards to the highest sphere,
Grow unnoticed there forever,
While in pure eternal manner,
God's presence makes you stronger.
Such is the spirit's libation,
Blending with the freest air:
Love's eternal revelation,
Bliss is unfolded there.

THE CHOIR OF YOUNG BOYS (Circling round the highest summit.)

Hands now entwining,
Joyfully circling round,
Soaring and singing
With sacred feeling's sound!
In the divinely taught,
Now you should trust:
He whom your worship sought
You'll see at last.

THE ANGELS (Soaring in the highest atmosphere, carrying the immortal part of Faust.)

He's escaped, this noble member
Of the spirit world, from evil,
Whoever strives, in his endeavour,
We can rescue from the devil.
And if he has Love within,
Granted from above,
The sacred crowd will meet him,
With welcome, and with love.

THE YOUNGER ANGELS

Every rose from the hands

Of those penitents, loving, holy,
Helped us win the victory,
The highest work, completed, stands,
The treasure of this soul we've won.
Evil bowed to petals thrown,
Devils fled the blows we threw.
Instead of Hell's hurts anew,
They felt spirits' loving pain:
Pierced with agony again
The old devil-master too was gone.
Shout with joy! All is done.

THE MORE PERFECT ANGELS

Carrying earthly remains
Is hard to endure,
Though they survive the flames,
They are still the impure.
Once a great spirit's strength
So tightly fits
All the four elements,
No angel splits
That double nature wed,
The inwardly binding:
To Eternal Love instead
Is left the unwinding.

THE YOUNGER ANGELS

Misted on rocky heights
Now we are feeling,
Nearing our clearer sight
Spiritual Being.
These clouds are vanishing

A crowd I see, moving,
Of sacred young men,
Freed from their earthly gloom,
Circling together,
Delighting again,
In the spring's brighter bloom,
In higher air.

Let them together then,
Lead him on: risen,
Perfect, and there!

THE YOUNG BOYS

Joyfully we receive
Him as a chrysalis:
So that we now achieve
A pledge of our bliss.
Let all the threads be lost
That now surround him!
He is already blessed,
Divine Love has found him.

DOCTOR MARIANUS (The transformed Faust: in the highest purest cell.)

Here is the freest view,
Of spirit borne skywards.
There women moving too
Drifting on upwards.
The splendour I see within
Garlands of stars,
There, all the Heavens' Queen
Shines from afar.

(Enraptured.)

Highest Queen of all the world!
Let me, in the blue,
With all heaven's web unfurled,
Know your mystery too.
Approve the tender, serious,
Stir of the human heart,
And in love's sacred bliss,
Raise it higher, through your art.
Our courage is unconquerable
When you command on high:
But our glow is gentler, still,
When you are satisfied.
Virgin, pure, of loveliest mind,
Mother, in all nobility,
Peer to everything divine,
Queen of our reality.
Such light cloud fragments
Wind all around her,
They are the penitents,
Women so tender,
All around her knees,
Breathing the air, free,
Desiring her mercy.
You are the Virginal Mother,
It's not surprising
Those seduced by another
Towards you are rising.
Taken in weakness now,
They are all harder to save:
Who can resist the power

Of desires that enslave?
How quickly the feet may slip
On smooth, sloping ground!
Who's un-tempted by glance and lip,
Or by flattering sounds?
The Mater Gloriosa soars into space.

CHOIR OF FEMALE PENITENTS

You soar, on high, now,
Towards the eternal realm,
Hear our pleading, though,
You, the peerless one,
Oh, merciful one!

MAGNA PECCATRIX (The sinful woman who anointed Christ's feet, See Luke vii:)

By the love that at the feet there
Of your son, divine, transfigured,
Let the tears like balsam flow there,
Despite the Pharisees' derision:
By the vessel, that so richly
Spread its fragrance on the ground,
By the locks of hair that softly
Dried the holy feet, shed round –

THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA (The woman at the well, See John iv)

By the well, where once before
Abraham's flocks were driven,
By the jar, that cooled the Saviour,
That to sacred lips was given:
By the pure and flowing fountain,
That poured out its clear water,
Overflowing, bright and certain,

Through all the worlds, forever.

MARY OF EGYPT (Acta Sanctorum)

By the consecrated place

Where the Lord's body lay:

By the warning arm, against my face,

That thrust me far from the doorway:

By my forty years' repentance,

Faithful, in that desert land:

By the blissful final sentence

That I wrote there on the sand –

ALL THREE

Since you offer your presence

To the worst sinner,

The prize of penitence

Soars upwards forever,

Begrudge not this true soul,

Who, this once, transgressed,

Not knowing she might fall,

Commensurate forgiveness!

A PENITENT, FORMERLY NAMED GRETCHEN (Stealing closer.)

Oh, bow down,

You peerless one,

You radiant one,

Your face, in mercy, towards my bane!

My true beloved,

No longer clouded,

Returns to me again.

THE SACRED YOUNG BOYS (Nearing, hovering in circles.)

With mighty limbs, already

He is beyond us there,

Returning to us, so richly,
The rewards of our care.
We were taken early
Out of life's chorus:
Yet he's learned, so he
Will gently teach us.

THE PENITENT, FORMERLY NAMED GRETCHEN

Changed to himself, he's scarce aware
Of the spirits' noble choir all around,
He hardly knows his new life, there,
Already he's so like the sacred crowd.
See, how he's thrown off every bond
Of his old earthbound integument,
And his first youth now's re-found,
It shines through his ethereal garment.
Allow me to teach him, here,
The new light still blinds him so.

THE MATER GLORIOSA

Come! Rise towards the higher spheres!
Gaining awareness of you, he will follow.

DOCTOR MARIANUS (Bowing, in adoration.)

Gaze towards that saving gaze,
All you, the penitent and tender,
To all those blissful ways,
Give thanks, and follow after.
Let every finer sense, unseen,
Be offered to her service,
Virgin, Mother now, and Queen,
Goddess, grant your mercies!

THE MYSTIC CHOIR

All of the transient,
Is parable, only:
The insufficient,
Here, grows to reality:
The indescribable,
Here, is done:
Woman, eternal,
Beckons us on.